CIVILISATION IN CONGOLAND

H. R. FOX BOURNE

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CIVILISATION IN CONGOLAND.

CIVILISATION

IN

CONGOLAND:

A STORY OF INTERNATIONAL WRONG-DOING.

BY

H. R. FOX BOURNE,

AUTHOR OF 'A MEMOIR OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY,' 'THE LIFE OF JOHN LOCKE,' 'THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EMIN PASHA EXPEDITION,' &c., &c.

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY

THE RIGHT HON. SIR CHARLES W. DILKE, BART., M.P.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Congo State, misnamed "Free" in memory of its promise, accepted by Europe, as to the elevation of the native and the encouragement of the foreigner, though founded in the name of Almighty God for international purposes, has been and is the home of appalling misgovernment and oppression. Many of us who were concerned in arranging with Portugal—on the basis of freedom of navigation, trade, and missionary enterprise, and measures directed against slavery—a treaty the execution of which we should have been allowed to watch, can now unite with those who, when the treaty was ultimately signed in February, 1884, denounced it on the ground that Portugal, even under the strictest guarantees, could never be as satisfactory an occupant of the Lower Congo as would be the so-called International Committee which became the Congo State. The Aborigines Protection Society and the merchants of Liverpool and Manchester are now able to join together in a final condemnation of the Congolese authorities. It will not now be denied outside of Belgium that Europe set up in the vast Congo district a State far worse than the Portuguese, even as the Portuguese then were, without allowance for the improvements which would have been introduced under the treaty.

The fiendish cruelty towards the natives which

has at times been exercised by some of those employed by the Congo State is not now denied even by the administrators of the State itself, and has been officially recognised by our own Government. It is, however, declared that things are better now; but of this there is little or no evidence.

Much of the story as told by Mr. Fox Bourne is, of course, not new to those who have followed the Congolese literature of Belgium, but the facts cannot be in the minds of the European public generally, or the existing toleration of defiance of promises made to Europe could not continue.

It is not only by the standard of the Aborigines Protection Society or of the merchants that the Congo State must be judged in order to be condemned. If there are any who are tempted to think that upon our principles Africa would never have been developed, it may be answered that the African explorers of our own nation and of the French are open-mouthed in their condemnation of Congolese methods. One of the greatest difficulties of ourselves and of the French in Africa has been the extension, outside of Congo boundaries, of the effect produced by the cruelties and consequent insurrections which have prevailed within the Congo valley.

Our responsibility is such that if, knowing what we do, we fail to denounce the crime, we become participators in it.

CHARLES W. DILKE.

THE AUTHOR'S EXPLANATION.

ALTHOUGH the Aborigines Protection Society, of which it is my privilege to be secretary, is not responsible for the statements made and the views expressed in this volume, the aim of the book is to direct attention to scandals and offences against which the Society has long been protesting, and the removal of which it earnestly desires.

In common with most of those interested in African affairs, the Society welcomed the decisions of the International Conference that met in Berlin in 1884, and its recognition of the lately founded Congo State on the explicit pledge that that State, throughout the area assigned to it, would conform to and carry out the proposals of the Conference. During the deliberations of the subsequent Conference held in Brussels in 1889–1890 the Society used such influence as it could exert in forwarding the avowed policy of King Leopold, who was at that time an honorary member of the Society. It is, therefore, all the more incumbent on it to do what it can towards correcting the error that has been committed.

It was not till 1890, when Sir H. M. Stanley and his associates in the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition disclosed the treatment to which they and others had subjected Congo natives, that the Society had

cognisance of grave evils calling for redress in this part of Africa; and even then, and for long afterwards, it declined to believe that the Sovereign of the Congo State and his advisers in Brussels were to blame for more than ignorance or apathy as regards occurrences that it was their duty to put a stop to. It was only after six years had been wasted in communications with the Brussels authorities, producing nothing but evasions and empty assurances, that the Society felt it necessary to widen its action.

In September, 1896, it appealed to the British Government in favour of steps being taken to supplement the Berlin and Brussels Conferences, whose requirements and stipulations had been disregarded and defied, by another European Conference, "at which measures might be concerted alike beneficial to the native races in Africa and to the civilised nations claiming authority over them." As in reply to this appeal the Marquis of Salisbury merely promised that "its representations should be borne in mind," a much more detailed statement of the abuses complained of, in so far as the Congo Government was responsible, was submitted three months later, not only to Lord Salisbury, but also to the Congo Government, and the document was extensively circulated and commented upon in English and foreign journals. Its demands were supported and strengthened, moreover, in a debate initiated by Sir Charles Dilke in the House of Commons on

2nd April, 1897, and at a public meeting held on the following 7th April, under the chairmanship of Mr. Leonard Courtney, with Mr. John Morley as well as Sir Charles Dilke among the speakers. Since then the Society has persevered in its as yet unsuccessful efforts to secure justice for the natives of Congoland.

In the early part of 1901 the Belgian Parliament had, ostensibly, the option of taking over the Congo State, hitherto the private property of King Leopold, and of converting it into a colonial possession of Belgium. Accordingly the Society, with the co-operation of some members of the Legislature in Brussels, made direct appeal to that body in terms briefly set forth in the following pages, where also will be found a sufficient account of the way in which the Belgian Parliament was coerced into abandoning its opportunity. As the Congo State remains in its founder's hands, and is now administered with, at any rate, no less cruelty than heretofore—as, moreover, the pernicious methods there employed are being to some extent imitated elsewhere, especially in French Congoland—there is greater need than ever for such intervention as the Society seeks to bring about. To this end a fresh and lengthy statement as to the treatment of natives in the Congo was submitted to the British Government on 27th March, 1902, and an influential meeting in furtherance of its object was, by permission of the

Lord Mayor, held at the Mansion House on 15th May. It is with the same purpose that the present volume is issued.

In putting together an account of the events of the past quarter of a century or so in Congoland I have quoted very freely from my authorities, at the risk of some clumsiness in construction and some repetition or apparent redundancy in the statement of facts. As the sole design of the book is to place in clear and truthful light the initial and fundamental faults in the methods of rule in Congoland, as well as the monstrous abuses which are the natural and inevitable outcome of those faults, I have preferred, wherever they could add weight to my statement, to cite the actual words of official documents, like the reports of the Berlin and Brussels Conferences and the 'Bulletin' of the Congo State; of outside and friendly exponents and critics, like Professor Cattier; of the Congo State's own approved agents, like Sir H. M. Stanley, Major von Wissmann, and Baron Dhanis; and of eye-witnesses whose veracity can scarcely be impugned, like the late Mr. Glave, Mr. Sjöblom, and Mr. Morrison. It will be noticed that scarcely any use has been made of the adverse testimony of discharged servants, whom the Congo Government regards as discredited betrayers of the secrecy imposed upon them. It will be noticed also that, appalling as are the revelations of atrocities which are no longer denied, but which

are made light of on the plea that they are exceptional occurrences, condemned and as far as possible obviated by the authorities, greater importance has been attached to the inherent defects of the machinery of government than to evidence as to defects in its working. Good laws may be broken, and no system is so perfect that it cannot be abused. But if the laws themselves are bad, and the system itself is vicious, they are inexcusable and intolerable.

H. R. Fox Bourne.

Broadway Chambers, Westminster,
22nd December, 1902.

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CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

WHITE men's acquaintance with Congoland was small until a few years before 1885, when its civilisation was solemnly resolved on by representatives of the European nations assembled in conference at Berlin. But the acquaintance began four centuries earlier, and Diogo Cam, the Portuguese voyager who in 1482 discovered the mouth of the river from which the region takes its name, found it occupied by a people who had acquired, such as it was, a civilisation of their own, the outcome of movements and developments through many earlier centuries.

The Limits of Congoland.

Congoland, or the Conventional Basin of the Congo, as defined by the Berlin International Conference, comprises the vast area in Equatorial Africa which is watered by the mighty river and its affluents, at least 1,500,000 square miles in extent, with a frontage of about 400 miles on the Atlantic side, and broadening out into a rough quadrangle, more than thrice as long and nearly thrice as wide, with its zigzag base in the low level formed by the Tanganyika and adjacent lakes.* The larger part of this region must once have been covered with forests, more or less dense, the remains of which are still densest in its north-eastern quarter. There also are to be found the descendants of, probably, the earliest

* The following is the wording of the Act, according to the official translation :—"This basin is bounded by the watersheds (or mountain ridges) of the adjacent basins, namely, in particular, those of the Niari, the Ogowe, the Shari, and the Nile on the north; by the eastern watershed line of the affluents of Lake Tanganyika on the east; and by the watersheds of the basins of the Zambezi and the Loge on the south. It therefore comprises all the regions watered by the Congo and its affluents, including Lake Tanganyika, with its eastern tributaries."

inhabitants of Africa, subsisting wholly on such roots or fruits as they can gather without cultivating the soil and on such animals as they can catch and kill.

The Earliest Congolese.

The so-called Pygmies of the Congo forests, rarely above four and a half feet in height, and possibly stunted by the hardships consequent on encroachments of stronger races, short-legged and long-armed, with protruding jaws and receding foreheads, hairy bodies and yellowish skins, are supposed to have remote kinship with the almost extinct communities of small people once plentiful in Europe as well as in Asia, and to have had their origin in Southern Asia, the source of so many later migrations to Africa. "From some such stock as this, which is the underlying stratum of all Negro races," writes Sir Harry Johnston, "may have arisen, in Somaliland perhaps, the ancestors of the Bushman-Hottentot group, which found its way down through Eastern Africa to Africa south of the Zambezi, in the western parts of which Bushmen and Hottentots still linger. These developed the high-cheek-boned, tall, thin-lipped Negro of the Sudan, and the blubber-lipped, coarse-featured, black-skinned Negro of the West African coastlands, and later the Bantu type, which is little else than the West African Negro tinged in varying degrees with the results of Hamitic intermixture; the Hamites being either a half-way stage in the evolution of a white man from the Negro or an invasion from Asia of a Caucasian people which ages ago mixed considerably with Negroes till it had acquired very marked negroid characteristics."*

Hamitic and Semitic Intrusions.

Hamitic migrations from Asia, perhaps by way of the Mediterranean, began in far distant times. From them resulted the Egyptian, Ethiopian, Berber, Tuareg, and other African communities of earlier origin than their Semitic rivals, the Arabs and Phœnicians, who

* 'The Uganda Protectorate' (1902), pp. 473, 474.

long before the Mohammedan incursions of a thousand years ago, settled in Abyssinia, founded Carthage, and established trading stations on the eastern as well as the northern coasts. As the mixed races with which the Hamitic and Semitic encroachments gradually stocked all the habitable regions outside the Congo Basin expanded, they came in contact with the sturdier Negroes who had been emerging from the forests or improving them as places of abode, and the driving back of some of these Negroes must have conduced to the shrinkage and crippling of the weaker natives whom we call Pygmies. Meanwhile an intermingling of Hamitic and Negro types produced the Bantu nation, which, it is supposed, took its rise somewhere on the fertile highlands to the west of Lake Victoria Nyanza, in what is now the Uganda Protectorate. Thence, if the surmise is correct, the Bantus must have spread not only westward until they reached the Gulf of Guinea, but also, with more vigour and in larger numbers, in a southerly direction. Those who crossed the Zambezi attained, as Zulus, their highest level of intelligence and physical strength, and branches from them, turning northward again, appropriated the southern parts of Congoland. Others, going west as well as north, met other Bantu wanderers and usurpers who had done their share in driving the Pygmies into the forest recesses and in building up the more or less disorganised or disorderly communities, differing widely among themselves, that were in possession of nearly all the country before the advent of white men.

We have no means of knowing how or by what stages this confused agglomeration of large and small communities was brought about, and the conditions and characteristics of many are so diversely reported on by the white travellers and rulers who have had access to them that no safe conclusions can be arrived at as to more than their broadest distinctions. As might be expected, the Negro type has predominated in the north, showing itself notably

in the savage Mambutu, Niam-Niam, and others between the Middle Congo and its great tributary the Ubangi, and in the Fans, who are supposed to have migrated in comparatively recent times from the region of the Upper Nile to the northern side of the Ogowe, where they proved themselves stronger than the Mpongwe and other Bantu settlers of earlier date. Other Negroes, akin to those of the Upper Nile valley, are associated, in deteriorated forms, with the Pygmies in the Congo Forest. Others again, with more or less mixture of Bantu blood, have acquired firm foothold and evil reputation as Manyema, on the western side of Lake Tanganyika, as Bakumu, further north, and as Batetela, further west. All or most of these Negro Congolese are cannibals, more barbarous than the Bantus, who abound especially in the central, southern, and western districts of Congoland, and make up the larger part of its population.

The Bakongo.

In the Bakongo or Bafiot group, occupying the Atlantic coastlands on both sides of the Congo estuary—parts of French Gaboon and of Portuguese Kabinda and Angola, as well as the intermediate territory now held by the Congo Free State—we may see what is probably the strongest surviving element of a widespread empire which, before it was interfered with by the Portuguese four centuries ago, may have included the Mpongwe on the north, a branch of the Bangala on the south, and the Balunda, Mabunda, and other groups more inland.*

Although considerably influenced, and in many respects injured, by the intercourse with Europeans which has been

* As this volume makes no attempt at ethnological thoroughness, I have generally, to avoid confusion, followed the most usual spelling of native names of places and people, giving preference, where convenient, to attempts at phonetic accuracy. It may be explained that Ba, Ma, and Wa are prefixes implying multitude. The Bakongo, Manyema, Mpongwe, and Wanyamwezi, for instance, are the people of Kongo or Congo, of Nyema, of Pongwe, and of Nyanwezi. Many of these tribal designations are in the nature of nicknames. Thus the cannibal propensities of the Manyema, as well as of the Niam-Niam, are indicated by the root-word *niam*, "human flesh."

far more extensive and lasting in their case than in that of others, the Bakongo have substantially retained their primitive institutions. These agree, in essentials, with the institutions of the Bantu communities in South Africa, and may be regarded as indicative of Bantu culture in general. With but vague notions as to a Supreme Power, the Bakongo are less degraded than are the Negroes of more northern latitudes by the fetish superstitions that attribute supernatural functions to the supposed embodiments or manifestations of deity in visible objects; and the oppression or misguidance of witch-doctors is proportionately less. The king or chief, deriving hereditary rank through his mother, is supposed to hold the country over which his control extends as trustee for the people inhabiting it, and subordinate to him are the princes or sub-chiefs of each province or district, under whom again are the heads of families or villages. There is no private property in land, but individual cultivators or collectors of its produce have a right to the fruits of their labour, subject to the contributions claimed from them towards the maintenance of the interests of the community. Although polygamy is usual, the first wife holds higher position than the others, and each mother is the guardian of her own children and of any property that they may inherit. "As regards the duties of married persons," we are told, "the woman plants, cooks, carries wood, and draws water; the man looks after the religious and fetish rights of the family, which are closely allied to the treatment of his sick relatives and their burial, finds his wife in dress, fish, results of the chase, palm-nuts, &c., builds her house, and cuts the bush where she may have selected to plant."*

The Balunda, Balolo, and Baluba.

The Balunda and other nations, broken up into numerous fragments, who chiefly occupy the southern portion of the Congo Basin

* See an interesting account of 'Laws and Customs of the Fjort or Bavili Family, Kingdom of Loango,' by Mr. R. E. Dennett, in the *Journal* of the African Society, No. 3, pp. 259–87 (1902).

are reported to be of more savage disposition than the Bakongo, apparently by reason of the frequent encroachments upon them down to comparatively recent times of marauding hordes from the east. But very favourable accounts are given of the Balolo or Mongo, the principal occupants of the horseshoe formed by the Middle Congo, and of some of the Baluba, to the south, on both sides of the Kasai. The Balolo have a right to their name, which means "men of iron." Alike as forgers of metal implements and as warriors, they surpass most of the other Bantu communities; and their success in clearing and cultivating the forest land to which they migrated from the north-east long ago, and in organising themselves as smiths, carpenters, weavers, and craftsmen in other ways, as well as farmers, is all the more remarkable because they keep up their old tribal institutions without any attempt at political cohesion. Akin to them are the Baluba, whom Major von Wissmann, on his first visit to them in 1881, described as "a nation of thinkers," no less industrious than intelligent, but in 1886 condemned for their rude workmanship and "childish insolence."* Mr. Latrobe Bateman said of their Bashilange branch, as the result of more friendly residence among them, "They are thoroughly and unimpeachably honest, brave to foolhardiness, and faithful to each other and to their superiors, in whom, especially if Europeans, they place the most complete, absolutely unquestioning reliance. They are prejudiced in favour of foreign customs rather than otherwise, and spontaneously copy the usages of civilisation. They are warm-hearted and affectionate towards their friends, and especially their kinsfolk, and are the only African tribe amongst whom, in their primitive state, I have observed anything like a becoming conjugal affection and regard. To say nothing of such recommendations as their emancipation from fetishism, their ancient abandonment of

* 'Through Equatorial Africa from the Congo to the Zambezi' (1891), pp. 121, 122.

cannibalism, their heretofore most happy experience of Europeans, and their national unity under the sway of a really princely prince (Kalamba), I believe them to be the most open to the best influences of civilisation of any African tribe whatsoever."* It would seem that the Baluba, scattered over a large extent of country, with much more barbarous communities adjacent to them or interspersed among them, and with too much readiness to adapt themselves to their immediate necessities and surroundings, had in some parts succumbed to the injurious influences of native intruders, like the Bakuba from the north and the Balunda from the south-east, long before additional misfortunes came to them through the contact with white men which dates from the later years of the fifteenth-century, and the bearings of which may now be briefly reviewed.

The Advent of the Portuguese.

Eleven years before the memorable voyage of Diogo Cam in 1482, Portuguese exploration of the West African coast had reached the mouth of the Ogowe, the northern boundary of Congoland. But nothing more was done until Diogo Cam, with the German geographer Martin of Bohemia as his companion, followed the coast for some 200 miles further south, and entered the much larger stream, five or six miles wide at its outlet, which was known to the inhabitants as Nzidi, "the Great River," and to which he gave the name of Ponderoso, "the Mighty." Having ascended its channel for some distance, he continued his investigations as far south as, at any rate, Benguela, and in 1485 he returned to Lisbon, taking with him a few natives to substantiate his report concerning the "kingdom of Congo" which he had discovered.

Five years later a larger expedition was sent out. Accompanied not only by the borrowed natives, who in the interval had been converted to Christianity and instructed in its doctrines, but also by a number of white

* 'The First Ascent of the Kassai' (1889), p. 20.

missionaries, Diogo Cam landed in March, 1491, near the southern gate of the mighty river, now known as San Antonio. He and his followers were welcomed by the chief of the district, who escorted them to Nbanza or Ambasi, the capital of the Congo kingdom, where an even heartier welcome awaited them. Not only was the king himself at once converted, accepting the baptismal name of John and altering the name of his city to San Salvador, but, as we are assured by the old chroniclers, all his principal officers and 100,000 of his subjects became Christians "in a trice." No attempt appears to have been made by the new-comers through the first half century or more to establish any political control over the people, but the religious and social changes they brought about, however superficial, were considerable, especially after a member of their royal family, educated in Lisbon, had been installed as bishop of the diocese.

The "kingdom of Congo" was probably in its decadence even when the Portuguese first visited it. The readiness with which its people yielded to Portuguese influence and threw themselves on Portuguese support betokened an unfitness to hold their ground against intruders. Before 1560 they were attacked by a cannibal horde known as the Yaka or Jaga, apparently coming westward from the neighbourhood of Lake Tanganyika, and their king and his court had to seek shelter on an island near Boma, in the Congo, then usually called the Zaire, as a variation from the native word Nzidi. An appeal to Portugal for help led to the sending out of a formidable army, under Francisco de Gova, which drove back the Yaka invaders; but fresh troubles were provoked thereby. The region between San Salvador and the sea, with the Lower Congo as its northern limit, having been ceded by the rescued king to the Portuguese as recompense for their assistance, the arrangement was resented by the actual chief of the district, and this chief was strong enough to exclude the aliens from his territory. The patriotic feeling thus

aroused, moreover, was quickened by the efforts of orthodox Catholics to reform abuses that had grown up in the native churches and of more worldly-minded schemers to obtain access to mines of precious metals supposed to be in the interior. As a consequence, the assumed Portuguese supremacy was cast off by the end of the sixteenth century, although the religious and other influences of the two or three previous generations were by no means rooted out. The fruits and weeds resulting from them continue to this day, and, though European ownership of anything more than the few forts and ports established on the coast only began to be real within the past half century, the work of "civilisation" has ever since been fitfully carried on from those forts and ports, of which the principal was San Paolo de Loanda, founded in 1578.

Paolo Diaz, who had visited the mouth of the Kwanza in 1560, and had been detained there as a guest or a prisoner for several years by the chief of the country, known as king of Angola, and a tributary to the king of Congo, was at length released and sent back to Lisbon with a request for Portuguese aid in putting down a local rebellion. Diaz accordingly returned in 1574, with 700 men in seven ships, and the title of "conqueror, coloniser, and governor of Angola." First taking possession of an island in Bango Bay, from which he rendered the assistance asked for, he planted the city of San Paolo on the mainland four years later. Two other years passed before the Angola king discovered that his authority was being undermined by the new-comers. Thereupon he contrived the massacre of most of them, and many years of fighting ensued before peace of a sort was established on the understanding that the Portuguese, abstaining from conquest of the interior, but trading with and giving occasional military help to its occupants, should have the mastery of the coast. That mastery was gradually extended not only to Benguela and ultimately to Mossamedes and other stations in the south, but also to Kabinda and further north of the Congo.

French and other Rivalries.

On both sides of the great river, however, the claims of the Portuguese to ownership of the entire coast were disputed by other European nations. French rivalry did not begin till 1839, but the Dutch, whose enterprise was in other respects sufficiently vigorous, had, in their prolonged struggle with the Spaniards in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, special reasons for assailing the possessions of Portugal while the latter was under Spanish dominion. In 1641 even Loanda fell into their hands for a time. "The Dutch," according to the historian Feo Cardozo, "who for several years had annoyed the Portuguese on the west coast, attempted to possess themselves of some of their ports for the purpose of obtaining a supply of slaves for their colonies in America. During the governorship of Fernan de Souza the Dutch despatched a fleet of eight ships, which attempted to force the bar of Loanda, but, meeting with a determined resistance, they returned from the coast after a stay of three months, having only captured four small vessels. The Count of Nassau, considering that without an abundant supply of slaves from the west coast the Dutch possessions in America would be of little value, determined to take stronger measures for obtaining them and sent a powerful fleet of twenty vessels. On 24th August, 1641, this formidable fleet appeared at Loanda, and such was the consternation it caused that the governor and inhabitants abandoned the city. The Dutch, landing next day, became, without opposition, masters of the place and of a large booty." In 1648 they were expelled, and with them their French and German associates in the enterprise, by an expedition, "towards the expenses of which," we are told, "the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro largely contributed as they saw how hurtful to their interests the loss of Angola would be from the failure in the supply of slave labour."*

* Monteiro, 'Angola and the River Congo' (1875), Vol. I., pp. 11-14.

The procuring of slaves for shipment to the West Indies and elsewhere was the main purpose of all appropriations of West African territory and intercourse with its people in the Congo region as well as on the Guinea coast, and though the British, French, Dutch, and other adventurers in this traffic occupied themselves chiefly on the north of the Equator, they were not willing that Portugal, which had taken possession of the Ilha do Principe, or Prince's Island, and of the Island of San Thome, or Saint Thomas, before the close of the fifteenth century, should have a monopoly in the south.

On this account Portugal's assumption of a right to any territory on the mainland above Loanda was persistently disputed. When, for instance, an expedition from that town seized Kabinda in 1783, and proceeded to establish a port there, a French squadron was promptly sent, it is recorded, "to demolish any fortifications that might impede the free commerce of all nations on the coast of Loango,"* and the right of the Portuguese to Kabinda, though it was soon recovered by them, was not fully acknowledged till 1884, and was most steadily denied by the English, who at one time held a fort there. The French in the meanwhile had secured a footing on the Gaboon in 1839, taken formal possession of it in 1844, and planted Libreville, the present capital of French Congo, as an asylum for freed slaves in 1848. French rivalry for the possession of a share in the Congo Basin, on its northern side, was active from that date. But more progress was at first made by Portugal, though chiefly in the extreme south, and with the object of drawing to Loanda, Benguela, and other ports, not themselves within the Basin, some of the trade with its inland residents which was increasing every year.

Unfortunately the trade was still largely in slaves—as it is, indeed, even at the present time, in a modified form. "Despite the theories and declamation of sensitive minds,

* 'Angola and the River Congo,' Vol. I., p. 16.

led away by false notions of the state of the question," Feo Cardozo wrote in 1825, "as long as the barbarity and ignorance of the African natives shall exist, the barter of slaves will always be considered by enlightened philanthropists as the only palliation to the ferocity of the laws that govern those natives."* The same view has ever since been freely held and vigorously acted on in spite of the prohibition of the slave trade which was decreed by Great Britain in 1807, by France in 1815, and by Portugal in 1830—in spite, too, of the subsequent abolition of the legal status of slavery throughout all their dominions which was enacted by Great Britain in 1833, by France in 1840, and by Portugal in 1878.

The Slave Trade.

In the years prior to 1875, according to Mr. Joachim John Monteiro, who then summed up his experiences of long residence in the country, "the number of slaves shipped in Angola, from the Congo to Benguela inclusively, could not have been far short of 100,000 per annum." "I was told by some of the old inhabitants," he reported, "that to see as many as ten to twelve vessels loading at a time at Loanda and Benguela was a common occurrence. At the time of the last shipments from Benguela, about ten years ago, I have seen as many as 1,000 slaves arrive in one caravan from the interior, principally from Bihe." "During the time of the slave trade"—that is, with America—he also wrote, "Benguela was one of the principal shipping ports of Angola, many thousands of slaves being sent off from it to the Brazils and Cuba. The last two or three shipments took place whilst I was working the copper deposits near Benguela. They were principally brought for sale by the natives of Bihe, and I once saw a caravan of nearly 3,000 blacks arrive, of whom 1,000 were slaves for sale. The average price of a full-grown healthy man or woman was about

* 'Angola and the River Congo,' Vol. I., p. 20.

£3 in cloth or other goods, and as low as 5*s.* for a little nigger."*

Portuguese Slave-Trading.

Bihe, about 400 miles to the east of Benguela, and on the highway traversed by caravans both from the neighbourhood of Lake Tanganyika and the source of the Congo in the far west and from the centre of the Congo Basin in the north, has through centuries been a great inland market, offering many advantages for the spread of such "civilisation" as Europeans have provided. The cloths and tools, the firearms and "fire-water" brought to it by native traders, of whom the most enterprising generally claimed to be Portuguese on the strength of their mixed parentage, could there be exchanged for African commodities, including the slaves procured in abundance by other traders, who also frequently had more or less Portuguese blood in their veins. The Ovim-Bundu, a branch of the Mabunda family that shares with the Bakongo most of the country on the western side of Congoland, appear to have been more influenced by the Portuguese in tastes and habits, if not also in blood, than any of the neighbouring tribes, and long ago to have found profit in catering for the new-comers. Many of them took European names and made pretence of being Europeans.

Such an one was a trader calling himself Jose Antonio Alvez, whom Commander Cameron met in 1874 at Kilamba, about 300 miles to the west of Lake Tanganyika, and more than twice that distance from Bihe. "Dondo, on the river Kwanza, in the province of Angola," Cameron reported, "was his native place. He had left there more than twenty years before and had spent the greater portion of the period in travelling and trading in the interior, formerly as agent for white merchants, but latterly on his own account. He came in state, being carried in a hammock with an awning by two bearers with belts covered with

* 'Angola and the River Congo,' Vol. I., p. 67; Vol. II., pp. 181, 182.

brass balls round their waists. I had almost taken it for granted from the manner in which he came that he was a white man. Great was my disappointment, however, when an old and ugly Negro turned out of the hammock. Certainly he was dressed in European fashion and spoke Portuguese, but no further civilisation could he boast of, notwithstanding his repeated asseverations that he was thoroughly civilised and the same as an Englishman or any other white man." Another of the "horde of ruffians" whom Cameron had dealings with, and to whom, he said, "must be awarded the palm for having reached the highest grade in ruffianism amongst them all," was "Lourenço da Souza Coimbra, a son of Major Coimbra, of Bihe." Coimbra and Alvez were partners or allies of the Rua chief Kasongo in his "plundering raids," and Cameron witnessed the issue of one of the raids. "Coimbra arrived," he wrote in July, 1875, "with a gang of fifty-two women tied together in lots of seventeen or eighteen. Some had children in arms, others were far advanced in pregnancy, and all were laden with huge bundles of grass-cloth and other plunder. These poor, weary and footsore creatures were covered with weals and scars, showing how unmercifully cruel had been the treatment received at the hands of the savage who called himself their owner. To obtain these fifty-two women at least ten villages had been destroyed, each having a population of from one to two hundred, or about 1,500 in all. Some may, perchance, have escaped to neighbouring villages, but the greater portion were undoubtedly burnt when their villages were surprised, and shot whilst attempting to save their wives and families, or doomed to die of starvation in the jungle unless some wild beast put a more speedy end to their miseries." "The cruelties perpetrated in the heart of Africa by men calling themselves Christians and carrying the Portuguese flag," Cameron averred, "can scarcely be credited by those living in a civilised land, and the Government of Portugal cannot but

be cognizant of the atrocities committed by men claiming to be her subjects. I have no hesitation in asserting that the worst of the Arabs are in this respect angels of light in comparison with the Portuguese and those who travel with them."*

Arab Slave-Trading.

The so-called Arabs here compared with the so-called Portuguese, neither of whom had more than a very small admixture of Arab or Portuguese blood to their Bantu stock, though there was doubtless much more reality in the Mohammedan professions of the former than in the Christian professions of the latter, had recently been imitating in the eastern parts of Congoland the vicious slave-raiding encouraged by Europeans in the south and west. Their most famous and powerful leader, though not quite the earliest, was Hamed-bin-Mohammed, better known by his nickname of Tipu-Tipu, "the gatherer of great wealth," whose ivory-collecting and slave-raiding for the Zanzibar market were limited to the southern borders of Lake Tanganyika when Dr. Livingstone made his acquaintance, but who was soon encouraged by European example to aim at much more extensive dominion.

The River Congo.

Although Burton, Speke, Grant, and many other European explorers had seen much of the people and places in the extreme east of Congoland, on all sides and both north and south of Lake Tanganyika, their researches had no immediate bearings on the condition of its inhabitants, and they were not aware of the connection of its waters with the great river flowing into the Atlantic. Livingstone, it is true, travelling from Loanda to the Zambezi as far back as 1855, and passing the Kasai and other rivers on his journey, "began," as he reported, "to perceive that all the western feeders of the Kasai, except the Kwango, flow first from the western side towards the centre of the country, then gradually turn, with the Kasai itself, to the north, and that

* 'Across Africa' (1827), Vol. II., pp. 57, 58, 94, 106, 136, 137.

after the confluence of the Kasai with the Kwango, an immense body of water, collected from all these branches, finds its way out of the country by means of the river Congo or Zaire on the west coast."* This was the first correct indication of the geography of the Congo Basin, and a great advance on the information of Captain James Kingston Tuckey, who was sent out by the British Government in 1816 to ascertain whether the Zaire, as it was still called, was identical with the Niger, and who, amid many disasters, was only able to collect trustworthy details as to the stream and its borders up to the lowest of its cataracts, about 170 miles inland. But though in his twenty-five years of wandering Livingstone threw much valuable light on this and other questions, he thought that the river, known to the natives at successive stages of its course as the Chambezi, the Luapula, and the Lualaba, which he discovered in the watershed between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika, and which he tracked as far as Nyangwe before 1871, was the head of the Nile. Cameron guessed the truth when he visited Nyangwe in August, 1874, and wrote, "This great stream must be one of the head waters of the Congo, for where else could that giant among rivers, second only to the Amazon in its volume, obtain the two million cubic feet of water which it unceasingly pours each second into the Atlantic?"† Instead of verifying his surmise, however, Cameron travelled southwards into Katanga, and so made his way to Benguela, leaving to Mr. Henry M. Stanley, who reached the Lualaba two years later, the credit of actual discovery.

Mr. Stanley's Explorations.

Having visited Livingstone at Ujiji, on the western side of Lake Tanganyika, in November, 1871, and accompanied him on some of his later investigations, Mr. Stanley returned to Africa in September, 1874, and occupied nearly three years on his famous expedition

* 'Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa,' chap. xxii.

† 'Across Africa,' Vol. II., p. 10.

"through the Dark Continent." He was at Nyangwe in October, 1876, when Tipu-Tipu, whom Cameron had met there only as a visitor, was in possession of the town and its surroundings, and from Tipu he obtained the canoes and other assistance required for exploring the Lualaba, which Cameron had failed to procure. Mr. Stanley's perilous and eventful voyage, covering with interruptions nearly ten months, had momentous consequences, and for the first time supplied the civilised world with information more or less precise and trustworthy about the vast extent of country traversed by him and the numerous and diverse communities of savages with whom in some cases he exchanged friendly greetings and in others had fierce encounters. His narrative is very instructive, if misleading in some particulars, and his views, considering their influence on European opinion and action, are all the more noteworthy where they are most open to criticism. For the present purpose only a few citations are necessary.

Tipu-Tipu's Slave-Raiding.

Of Tipu-Tipu, when they met and had dealings at at Nyangwe, Mr. Stanley thought favourably, and he found excuse, if not justification, for the Arab encroachments in quest of ivory and slaves in the district between Lake Tanganyika and Nyangwe, and further west, which was tenanted by the cannibal Manyema. "One must not rashly impute all the blame to the Arabs and Wa-swahili of the Zanzibar coast for their excesses," he wrote, "for the natives are also in a way to blame. Just as the Saxons, Danes, and Jutes, invited by the Britons, became their masters, so the Arabs, invited by the Manyema to assist them against one another, have become their tyrants. Bribes were offered to us three times by the Manyema to assist them in destroying their neighbours, to whom they are of near kin, and with whom they have almost daily relations. Our refusal of ivory and slaves appeared to surprise the chiefs, and they expressed the opinion that we

white men were not as good as the Arabs, for the Arabs would have assisted them." "One really does not know whether to pity or to despise the natives of Manyema," Mr. Stanley added. "Many are amiable enough to deserve good and kind treatment, but others are hardly human. They fly to the woods on the approach of strangers. If the strangers follow them into the woods to persuade them to return and sell food, the purpose of the visit is mistaken, and they are assailed from behind depths of bush and tall trees. They are humble and liberal to the strong-armed Arab, savage and murderous and cannibalistic to small bands, and every slain man provides a banquet of meat for the forest natives of Manyema."*

Mr. Stanley on the Congo.

Escorted by Tipu-Tipu till he had passed Riba-Riba and was more than half-way between Nyangwe and the great cataracts to which he gave the name of Stanley Falls, and after that left to his own resources with the dwindling residue of the followers he had brought from Zanzibar, Mr. Stanley explored the river and its banks, peopled by cannibal Bakumu and by the Pygmies of the Congo Forest, by Basoko, northern Bangala, and others. After a fight near the junction of the Aruwimi and the Congo, almost in the centre of the Great Forest, he wrote: "This last of the twenty-eight desperate combats which we had had with the insensate furies of savageland began to inspire us with a suspicion of everything bearing the least semblance of a man, and to infuse into our hearts something of that feeling which probably the hard-pressed stag feels when, after distancing the hounds many times, and having resorted to many stratagems to avoid them, wearied and bathed with perspiration, he hears with terror and trembling the hideous and startling yelps of the ever-pursuing pack. We also had laboured strenuously through ranks upon ranks of savages, scattered over a score of flotillas, had

* 'Through the Dark Continent' (1880 edition), pp. 380, 381.

endured persistent attacks night and day while straggling through them, had resorted to all modes of defence, and yet at every curve of this fearful river the yells of the savages broke loud on our ears, the snake-like canoes darted forward impetuously to the attack, while the drums and horns and shouts raised fierce and deafening uproar. We were becoming exhausted. We were also being weeded out by units and twos and threes. There were not thirty in the entire expedition"—which numbered 224 hired slaves when it started from Zanzibar, and to which 132 other followers had been added—"that had not received a wound."* Though Mr. Stanley was the intruder, and the frightened natives, driven to desperation by reports of the treatment already accorded to others of their race, bore more resemblance to hard-pressed stags than those who forced their presence upon them, his courage and perseverance were remarkable, and when he had passed the confluence of the Ubangi and the Congo, and was approaching the broad waters now known as Stanley Pool, he found, as he reported, that he need "no longer sneak amongst reedy islets or wander in secret amongst wildernesses of water," that "the native, as we ascertained opposite Bolobo, was not the destructive infuriate of Irebu or Mompurangi, or the frantic brute of Mongala and Marunja," but that "he appeared to be toning down into a man and to understand that others of his species inhabited this globe."† Befriended by these Bateke and Bayanzi and by others, he passed on to Boma, and reached the Atlantic in August, 1877.

Europeans in Lower Congo.

At Boma he and 115 survivors of the 356 followers he had taken with him were again in touch with civilisation. "There are," he reported, "some half-dozen factories at Boma, engaging the attention of about eighteen whites. The houses are all constructed of

* 'Through the Dark Continent' (1880 edition), p. 502.
† *Ibid.*, p. 527.

wooden boards with, as a rule, corrugated zinc roofs. The residences line the front; the Dutch, French, and Portuguese factories being west of an isolated, high, square-browed hill, and the English factory being a few hundred yards above it. Each factory requires an ample courtyard for its business, which consists in the barter of cotton fabrics, glass-ware, crockery, ironware, gin, rum, guns, and gunpowder for palm-oil, ground-nuts, and ivory. Though Boma is comparatively ancient, and Europeans have had commercial connections with this district and the people for over a century, yet Captain Tuckey's description of the people, written in 1816 —their ceremonies and modes of life, their suspicion of strangers and intolerance, their greed for rum and indolence, the scarcity of food—is as correct as though written to-day."*

Of the condition of affairs, not only at Boma, which is about sixty miles from the coast, but also at Banana, the northern gate of the Congo, and at Ponta da Lenha, midway between the two, as well as in the whole district, an account was given by the British representative at Loanda in a despatch to the British Government a few weeks before Mr. Stanley's arrival on the scene. "Trading factories," wrote Consul Hopkins on 28th April, 1877, "are established at Banana, Ponta da Lenha, and Boma; at Banana, Dutch, French, and Portuguese; at Ponta da Lenha, Dutch Flemish, English, and Portuguese; and the same at Boma. All these factories, with the exception of the English, as far as I can learn, are more or less worked by slave labour. The Dutch, I willingly bear testimony to, found matters as they are when they commenced their trade operations on this coast. They hold about 150 slaves; but these people are so well treated that, to all intents and purposes, they are free, and they are never sold or exchanged; in fact, it is their boast that they are children of the Dutch house. The next holders of slaves, and they

* 'Through the Dark Continent' (1880 edition), p. 619.

should take rank first, are the Portuguese and Spanish traders."*

That statement was introductory to the consul's report of "certain horrible proceedings that," he averred, "have lately taken place in the Congo river," and constituted "a crime so barbarous and fiendish that it can hardly have ever been surpassed for cruelty in the annals of the slave trade." For an alleged attempt at Ponta da Lenha to burn down a factory rented by the Portuguese "owner of a large number of slaves," notorious as "a very old slave dealer on the coast," one of his slave boys was arrested and tortured until, "under the influence of the great agony he was suffering," he accused first one of his fellow-slaves and afterwards several others of participation in the offence. The first victim, who at the time of the occurrence was "many miles away," was captured and, "without being interrogated at all, was bound hand and foot, taken out in a canoe into the middle of the stream, and drowned." The rest shared the same fate, twelve being taken to Boma by "John Scott, a merchant trading there and a British subject," who caused eleven of them, men, women, and children, to be "all attached to an iron chain and drowned in the river in front of his house." "In all," the consul reported, "I am assured that about thirty-two unfortunate, helpless beings were murdered"; and he added, "I am also informed that the murder of one or more slaves by white men in the Congo is almost a daily occurrence, and that the torture of the thumb-screw was applied to many more besides the boy first alluded to, and in some instances it was so severe that the bones of the fingers of these most unfortunate people were completely crushed before they would implicate others, and beyond a doubt, under their excruciating agony, they accused many innocent people,

Europeans and Natives in 1877.

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 2 (1883), p. 80.

for children of tender years were included and not spared." *

These outrages, for which no punishment appears to have been found possible, helped—before other interests were quickened by the publication of Mr. Stanley's experiences—in directing attention to the necessity for some attempt at checking abuses that had long been growing. Though the French had as yet made little use of the Gaboon district occupied by them in 1844, outside of Congoland, and still less of Loango and the other stations which they had subsequently planted to the south of the Ogowe, and although the Portuguese claim to ownership of any territory north of Ambriz had been disputed by the other European Powers, and most persistently by Great Britain, the whole intermediate coastline of about 300 miles, and especially the frontage of Kabinda, which was chiefly possessed by Portuguese adventurers, had come to be a much-frequented no-man's-land, or every-man's-land, in which more or less profitable trade was carried on by unscrupulous adventurers, as well as by respectable merchants and their agents, of various nationalities.

Portuguese Proposals for Reform.

"To England and to Portugal," the Government in Lisbon had pompously and speciously written in December, 1875, for the information of the British Government, "Providence seems to have assigned the glorious mission of civilising the vast regions of Southern Africa. In fact, no other nation occupies territory which in importance or extent can be compared with those which, by

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 2 (1883), pp. 81, 82, The Rev. W. Holman Bentley, the Baptist missionary, who arrived in the district two years later, makes light of the affair, although he reports the murder of "some forty." John Scott, he says, "was a half-caste from St. Helena, and figured as an Englishman. He had traded long on the coast and had made and lost several fortunes." Mr. Bentley adds, "When we commenced our work, he showed us always the kindest hospitality." He was angry, however, when his colleague, the Rev. Thomas Combes, was asked to pay twice over a debt of £40 to Scott, "who had been acting as our agent."—'Pioneering in the Congo' (1900), Vol. I., pp. 47, 48, 107.

right, belong to the Crowns of these two nations. That similarity of opinions and interests which unites in the strictest alliance the two nations in Europe, his Majesty's Government thinks, must and should produce equally favourable results when they are, with sincerity, united on their African colonies." It was accordingly urged that "immediate action" should be conjointly taken by the two Powers to put a stop to "acts of hostility on the part of the indigenous population against the persons and property of merchants established in those parts of the coast of Africa where garrisons had not as yet been appointed." "It is necessary to prevent the repetition of such acts of violence," it is urged, "and the quickest way of doing so would be an effective occupation, which, without embarrassing with useless trammels the transactions of legitimate commerce, would efficaciously protect the same from the depredations and insults of the natives. Of the nations which such an occupation would most immediately interest Portugal is naturally the one most fitted to carry it out." *

Though it was favourably entertained for a time by the British Government, nothing came of this proposal, and there was much greater need for the defence of native interests against white oppressors than for the protection of Europeans from black malcontents. Yet the Portuguese Government, when asked to punish its subjects for such malpractices as were brought to light in 1877, had some ground for replying that "the recent outrages are but the natural results of the deplorable condition of affairs on the Congo." "The number of Europeans of various nationalities," it was explained, "who for the purposes of trade have established factories on the banks of the river has rapidly increased of late. These individuals obtain servants from the neighbouring chiefs in exchange for goods, so that, in point of fact, these servants are little removed from slaves. Owing to the lawless state of the country,

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 2 (1883), p. 71.

the masters are in constant dread of their servants or slaves, and therefore do their best to reconcile them to the state of bondage in which they are kept. Nevertheless, there are among these Negroes many bad and turbulent characters who are continually misbehaving and attempting to desert, and who have therefore to be kept down with a strong hand." In feeble apology for the murders at Ponta da Lenha it was urged: "The employer of these men had suffered terrible losses at their hands. His factory and stores, with all they contained, had been twice if not three times set on fire and utterly destroyed by them. The consequence was that, for the protection of their property, and even of their lives, which were in imminent jeopardy, the owners of factories in that neighbourhood combined together, and having, with the assistance of some friendly native chiefs, succeeded in catching the incriminated Negroes formed a sort of drumhead court-martial for their trial, and condemned to death a certain number of the worst characters amongst them as an example to the rest. These extemporised judges took upon themselves the part of executioners, and, in order that the terrible sentence they had passed should produce the effect they desired on the whole of the surrounding tribes, they divided the condemned men into several batches and drowned them at different points on the river. The lives and property of the unfortunate individuals who were driven to take such desperate remedies are completely at the mercy of savages whom fear alone will effectually restrain from deeds of violence and rapine. In these territories there is no one to whom they can appeal for that aid and protection which they so urgently require. Since there was no law, and, even if there had been any, no one to put it in force, what other course was open to them, unless they had been prepared to abandon altogether the field of their commercial operations, but the adoption of the first of all laws, that of self-preservation?"*

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 2 (1883), p. 85.

Thus reasons or excuses were provided for the larger projects for the spread of civilisation in Congoland which were presently to be entered upon, and of which the most important incidents and their bearings will be set forth in the following pages.

CHAPTER II.

King Leopold's Project [1876-1884].

To the enterprise and perseverance of King Leopold II., the Belgian sovereign, is mainly due the commencement, as well as the subsequent guidance and control, of modern movements for the European appropriation of Congoland.

The Conference at Brussels in 1876.

It was at his invitation that, in September, 1876, a three days' conference of politicians, geographers, travellers, and philanthropists was held in Brussels, and discussed schemes for opening the interior of Africa to commerce, civilisation, and scientific research. At this conference, which was in no way official, the Belgian representatives were the most numerous, the foremost of thirteen, besides the king himself, being Baron Lambermont. But there were nine from England, including Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir William Mackinnon, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, and Commander Cameron, who had lately returned from his journey across the continent; also five from France, four from Germany, one from Italy, and one from Russia.

The International African Association.

As its result an International Commission or International African Association was formed, as a central organisation for the National Committees it was proposed to set up in eleven European countries, together with one in the United States.

The English friends of the movement prudently abstained from taking part in it to this extent, and assisted, instead, in the Royal Geographical Society's strictly scientific expedition in East Africa under Keith Johnston and his successor, Joseph Thompson. France and Italy, too, while giving formal support to the International Association,

devoted their energies to independent and more or less rival researches, the former in and beyond the Gaboon district, the latter in the Abyssinian and Shoan regions. Other nations being inactive, Germany alone co-operated with the Belgian National Committee, or professed to do so. The German African Society, though started with that object, soon found itself in open conflict with its nominal ally. Nearly all the funds of the International Association, moreover, were supplied by the Belgian Committee, and especially by the Royal President of both, and their avowed or unavowed purposes soon came to be carried out under the sole direction of King Leopold and wholly by Belgian members, except that a few outsiders, including General H. S. Sanford, a former United States Minister, and Dr. Nachtigal, the German traveller, were occasionally made use of as advisors or agents.*

Its Intentions and Proposals.

Generous expression of the hopes raised at the time by the project, as it was then understood, was given by Commander Cameron. "The philanthropical efforts of His Majesty the King of the Belgians," he wrote, "if they meet with the support they deserve, although not either of a missionary or of a commercial character, must materially assist in opening up the country. The establishment of depôts or stations on a trunk-route across the continent, where the tired and weary explorer may find a resting-place and fresh stores and men to carry on his task, cannot fail to do much towards systematising the work of discovery, instead of leaving every man to hunt for his own needle in his own bundle of hay. The establishment of these stations would necessitate the maintenance of regular means of communication between them, and therefore each new explorer would be able to travel direct to the base of his operations, without wasting time, money, or energy in getting into a

* J. S. Keltie, 'The Partition of Africa' (1895), pp. 119-124; H. M. Stanley, 'The Congo and the Founding of its Free State' (1885), Vol. I. pp. 33-38.

new country. These stations might be commanded either by Europeans or by men of character amongst the Arab merchants, who might be thoroughly relied on to do their work in an upright and honourable manner. By commencing from both coasts, a chain of stations some 200 miles apart might be established in a comparatively short space of time." News of Mr. Stanley's voyage down the Congo had not yet reached Europe; but King Leopold's original scheme, as understood by Cameron, and supposed by him to be "not of a commercial character," included the utilisation of that and other waterways. "A steamer," he wrote, "should be stationed on each section of a river, depôts should be formed at the rapids with provisions and merchandise, and the goods should be carried past them by men stationed there for the purpose, or by bullock-carts or small lines of tramways. The affluents of the Congo would enable our traders and missionaries to penetrate into the greater portion of the at present unknown regions of Africa. The Congo, at its mouth, is not under the dominion of any European power, and the principal merchants there are the Dutch. They would be delighted to see the trade of the interior in the hands of Europeans, instead of being dependent on the caprices of some of the most depraved of the West Coast tribes, who, ever since the Congo has been discovered, have been engaged—in company with Europeans even more vile than they—in slave trade and piracy." "Let those interested in scientific research," Cameron urged, "come forward and support the King of the Belgians in his noble scheme for united and systematic exploration. Let those who desire to stamp out the traffic in slaves put their shoulders to the wheel in earnest, and by their voice, money, and energy aid those to whom the task may be entrusted."*

Its Early Operations.

The first expedition sent out by the Belgian National Committee, in accordance with its original proposals, started before the close of 1877, and had for its object the planting of stations

* 'Across Africa,' Vol. II. pp. 330, 333, 337.

on the west side of Lake Tanganyika, and the improvement of communications between them and Zanzibar, with a view to promoting scientific inquiries, befriending all travellers, and, as an "ulterior" aim, suppressing the slave trade "by civilising influences." It met with many disasters, however, and Lieutenant Cambier, on whom its leadership devolved after the death of his superior officer, only contrived to establish one station, and that at Karema, on the south-east of the lake, in August, 1879.

Meanwhile the announcement of Mr. Stanley's explorations had brought about a reshaping of so much as remained of the International African Association. On Mr. Stanley's halting at Marseilles, in January, 1878, he was met by General Sanford and the chief secretary of the Association, who informed him, on behalf of King Leopold, that "his discoveries had given birth to a grand project, for the realisation of which his experience and active assistance were needed."* A year was occupied with elaborate preparations and complicated negotiations; but these were sufficiently advanced for "various persons of more or less note in the commercial and monetary world, from England, Germany, France, Belgium, and Holland," to be invited to a conference with King Leopold in Brussels in November. "The object of the meeting," reported Mr. Stanley, "was to consider the best way of promoting the very modest enterprise of studying what might be made of the Congo river and its basin. This body of gentlemen desired to know how much of the Congo river was actually navigable by light-draught vessels? what protection could friendly native chiefs give to commercial enterprises? were the tribes along the Congo sufficiently intelligent to understand that it would be better for their interests to maintain a friendly intercourse with the whites than to restrict it? what tributes, taxes, or imposts, if any, would be levied by the native chiefs for right of way through their country?

* A. J. Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo' (1899), p. 19.

what was the character of the produce which the natives would be able to exchange for European fabrics? provided that in future a railway would be created to Stanley Pool from some point on the Lower Congo, to what amount could this produce be furnished? Some of the above questions were answerable even then; others were not. It was, therefore, resolved that a fund should be subscribed to equip an expedition to obtain accurate information, the subscribers to the fund assuming the name and title of Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo."*

The Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo.

In due course, or in hot haste, the Comité, with a nominal capital of 1,000,000 francs, but with prompt buying out of all foreign contributors, was brought into such relations with the Association that the old body was practically superseded by the new. King Leopold was president of both. Colonel Strauch, the working head of the one, was made chief secretary of the other. The Comité, according to Mr. Stanley, had separate objects from those of the Association, and "the ultimate intention of embarking on a greater enterprise, if the reports from the Congo are favourable"; but from this time the Association drops out of notice. Three years afterwards, "having satisfied itself that progress and stability were secured," the Comité virtually appropriated the old title and, though in no way international, renamed itself "Association International de Congo."† For this fresh title, as we shall see, another, that of "État Indépendant du Congo" was substituted, two years later.

Mr. Stanley must be credited, if not with initiation of the more recent developments of the business, at any rate with much of the energy and skill shown in pushing it through successfully, under conditions materially altering its first intention and rendering it far more profitable to his employers, as well as to himself, than it could otherwise have been. "The enterprise," says its historian, "was

* Stanley, 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 26. † *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 28, 50, 51.

conducted with the most feverish activity and in the greatest secrecy. If, after its ambitious and original conception, anything else could be surprising, it was the rapidity, the discretion, and the orderliness with which it was realised."* The secrecy would have been out of place had the philanthropic intentions of 1876 been adhered to. The fact that secrecy and deceptions were resorted to betrays consciousness of a change of plans and of the need for its concealment. The speed, however, was exemplary. The Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo was not formally constituted until 20th November, 1878, and on that day Mr. Stanley received definite instructions and authority to carry out the plans he had suggested. By 23rd January, 1879, he was ready to start for Zanzibar, there to recruit the officers and carriers who were to accompany him round the South African coast, and to meet at Banana, on the mouth of the Congo, the consignments he had before leaving Europe arranged for from "the builders of steamers, lighters, and steel whaleboats, the makers of portable wooden houses and corrugated iron stores, the waggon makers, and the provision packers." "On 12th August, 1877," he proudly wrote, "I had arrived at Banana Point, after crossing Africa and descending its greatest river. On 14th August, 1879, I arrived before the mouth of this river to ascend it with the novel mission of sowing along its banks civilised settlements, to peacefully conquer and subdue it, to remould it in harmony with modern ideas into National States, within whose limits the European merchant shall go hand in hand with the dark African trader, and justice and law and order shall prevail, and murder and lawlessness and the cruel barter of slaves shall for ever cease."†

How that promise has been broken will presently be shown in some detail.

Whatever may have been privately expected of him, Mr.

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 20.

† 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 59.

Mr. Stanley's Undertaking.

Stanley, in entering on his work, vied with his employers in the profession of good intentions. "It would be wise," Colonel Strauch had written, in almost amusing ignorance of possibilities and their limitations, "to extend the influence of the stations on the chiefs dwelling near them, of whom a republican confederation of free Negroes might be formed, such confederation to be independent, except that the King, to whom its conception and formation was due, would reserve the right to appoint the President, who should reside in Europe." "Each station should be a little commonwealth," it was stated in Colonel Strauch's instructions; also, "This project is not to create a Belgian colony, but to establish a powerful Negro State." On this point, and some others, Mr. Stanley made no secret of his determination to follow his own counsels, under a no less showy assumption of philanthropy. As regards the projected Negro Republic, he replied: "It would be madness for one in my position to attempt it, except in so far as one course might follow another in the natural sequence of things. We must leave the petty tribes as we found them, and leave each and all to observe for themselves what is acceptable. To such as seek the protection, comfort, and care of the stations a kindly refuge will be granted, and whatever may be done to improve their condition will be done to the utmost of our power, with the utmost goodwill, with a view of not only consolidating the influence of the stations, but of improving our means of civilising such people as may come in immediate contact or relationship with us."*

Other statements in the letter of 8th July, 1879, which is here being quoted from, deserve to be borne in mind. "A footing cannot be made on the Congo," wrote Mr. Stanley, "without having first entered into agreement or treaty with the chiefs, either for commercial or philanthropic purposes. This must be done with tact and generosity, exercising large forbearance in all communications. Such

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 52, 53.

privileges as they may grant to us must be paid for, and to meet all such exigencies I am liberally provided. I entertain no fear that the natives will place any impediment in my way, and precautions will be taken to prevent suspicion and ignorance aggravating either party in the proposed treaties to the destruction of our hopes." Again, "Along the line of our route you may rest assured that such influence as we may have will be due to our upright and strictly honourable commerce or enterprise with such natives as may seek by self-interest our acquaintance. We shall require but mere contact to satisfy all and any natives that our intentions are pure and honourable, seeking their own good, materially and socially, more than our interests. We go to spread what blessings arise from amiable and just intercourse with people who have hitherto been strangers to them." Again, "That they will immediately and at once form into a political confederation or union for the general good I entertain no hope. On the contrary, they will retain their own degraded customs, be as jealous as ever of every tribal right, and resent every foreign interference in their own customs or personal modes of life. All we can hope at present is to win suffrage to live and move about without fear of violence, by patience, good nature, loyal friendship, and honourable traffic." To Colonel Strauch's direction that "the stations should be occupied by coloured men, freemen, under the superintendence of white men," Mr. Stanley answered, "With any person but a genuine freeborn and free-living man nothing could be done in Congoland, and I do not believe that in our direst extremity we should be willing to enlist the services of, or place dependence in, any persons or person other than free." *

Mr. Stanley's Achievements.

Between 21st August, 1878, when his flotilla was ready to leave Banana, and 1st June, 1882, after he had reached the waters he then discovered and named Lake

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 53, 54.

Leopold, and where he was obliged by a dangerous fever to pause in his labours and return to Europe, Mr. Stanley appears to have for the most part fairly carried out his promises and intentions.

Passing Boma and the other places in which trading factories had already been established, and of which Noki, about 108 miles from Banana, was the most distant, his first long halt was at Vivi, ten miles higher up on the northern side of the river, where he obtained his first "concession" for "£32 down in stock and a rental of £2 per month." The terms of his bargain, which is memorable as a precedent, were that within an area of "twenty square miles at the utmost," as he reported, "of all the land unoccupied by villages or fields or gardens I should make my choice, and build as many houses, and make as many roads, and do any kind of work, I liked. I should be considered as the 'mundele' (chief trader) of Vivi, and no other white man should put foot on Vivi soil without permission from me; no native chief of inland or riverside should molest any man in my employ within the district of Vivi; help should be given for work, and the people of Vivi, such as liked, should engage themselves as workmen; anybody, white or black, native or foreign, passing to or fro through the land, should do so freely, night and day, without let or hindrance. If any disagreement should arise between any of my people, white or black, and the people of Vivi, they, the chiefs, would promise not to try and revenge themselves, but bring their complaint before the 'mundele' of Vivi, that he might decide upon the right and the wrong of it; and if any of their people were caught in the act of doing wrong, then the white man shall promise that his chief shall be called to hear the case against him, and, if the crime is proved, the chief shall pay the price according to custom."*

With the help of 122 coast natives and other Congolese, besides 81 East Africans brought from Zanzibar, and

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 135, 137.

twelve Europeans, Mr. Stanley spent more than four months in building Vivi station, with "its snow-white cottages and *châlet* visible from afar," its storehouses, landing-stage, and other appliances; and all this appears to have been done without any serious difficulties with the inhabitants. He had harder work, however, in cutting pathways for the conveyance of his boats and stores, as well as of his party, between the river site opposite to Vivi—on which Matadi now stands—and Isangila, and again between Manyanga and Stanley Pool, in order to avoid the intermediate portions of the Congo which are rendered impassable by its rocks and cataracts. This arduous undertaking involved terrible hardships and heavy loss of life. The gaps from deaths and desertions had to be filled up by fresh reinforcements of labour from the coast, paid for in cloth or gin, at rates varying in value from 12*s.* to 24*s.* a month, together with food; but labour was difficult to obtain in spite of its attendant allurements. Mr. Stanley was distressed by "the unconquerable indolence of the people and the scarcity of their numbers." He complained that, "compared to the extent of their possessions, they are really too rich to work." Their fruits and nuts and other garden produce "bring sufficient and more than sufficient for native wants," he reported; "it requires very strong inducements to tempt them to abandon their easy home and village life for work at stations or on roads." The chief inducement was the strong drink offered in barter for local commodities, as well as in lieu of wages. "Many of the coast people take pay largely in gin," wrote Mr. Stanley. "Bottles of gin or rum are marketable, and serve as currency. Though we may regret that gin is considered as curreney, we cannot help it. We require native produce for food daily; without an assortment of currency we should be put to great shifts frequently. The gin and rum are also largely consumed as grog by our native workmen. We dilute both largely, and so reduce its spirit; but we are compelled to serve it out morning and evening. A stoppage

of this would be followed by a cessation of work." In further apology for his use of this agent of "civilisation" Mr. Stanley said, "I have not seen any ill-effects from it as yet. On the contrary, it has increased their sociability, and made people otherwise silent open their minds frankly."*

De Brazza's Rivalry.

Mr. Stanley was still at Vivi when, in February, 1880, he received a letter from Brussels warning him that a French expedition was on its way from the Ogowe to Stanley Pool. The head of this expedition was Lieutenant de Brazza, a young Italian in the French service, who, between 1875 and 1878, had accompanied Dr. Ballay and M. Marche on the exploration of the district south of the Gaboon and especially of the Ogowe, which was then vainly expected to prove one of the outlets of the Congo. After tracing the Ogowe to its source M. de Brazza came across the Alima, flowing in the opposite direction, and, as his associates objected to his following this stream, he returned to Europe before learning, from the report of Mr. Stanley's earlier expedition, that it was a tributary of the Middle Congo, and might offer a more favourable route to the central parts of Congoland than was afforded by the main river with its long stretch of cataracts.

M. de Brazza, accordingly, lost no time in going back to the promising field of travel, as the agent of the French Committee of the International African Association, and therefore ostensibly a colleague, though really a keen rival, of Mr. Stanley. He was supplied by the French Government, it was stated, with a subsidy of 100,000 francs in the expectation that "he would thus open up a road which would tap the country through which the Congo flows, above the rapids, long before Mr. Stanley could reach it, and convey such produce as it may contain to territory under French dominion."† But he was not able to leave Europe before November, 1879, ten months after Mr.

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 193, 194.

† 'Parliamentary Papers,' Slave Trade, No. 1 (1881), p. 13.

Stanley. Thereupon, in the hope of forestalling any bargains he might make with native chiefs which would ultimately serve as grounds for French appropriation, Colonel Strauch sent prompt information of his departure to the Congo. Mr. Stanley received it scornfully. "I beg leave to say," he replied on 6th February, 1880, "that I am not a party in a race for the Stanley Pool, as I have already been in that locality just two and a half years ago, and I do not intend to visit it again until I can arrive with my fifty tons of goods, boats, and other property, and after finishing the second station. If my mission simply consisted in marching for Stanley Pool I might reach it in fifteen days; but what would be the benefit of it for the expedition or the mission that I have undertaken?"*

The probable benefit to Mr. Stanley's employers, had he acted on their suggestion, would have been the making by him instead of by his rival of the "treaties" with native chiefs on the northern side of the river which were recognised in support of European claims to territorial rights in Congoland, and the consequent limitation of French Congo to a very much smaller area than it now occupies. As it happened, M. de Brazza, hurrying on to the Congo, which he reached by way of the Ogowe and the Lupini, had made several treaties and planted several flags before arriving at Stanley Pool. There, on 10th September, 1880, he obtained his most important concession from Makoko, the principal Bateke chief on the north side of the river, who represented himself as also overlord of the country on the southern side.† Well satisfied with that achievement, which was the starting of Brazzaville, M. de Brazza was on his way back to the coast when he met Mr. Stanley at Ngoma Point, about twenty miles west of the Pool, on 7th November. The one explorer enter-

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 158. For details of M. de Brazza's work see his 'Trois Explorations dans l'Ouest Africain effectuées de 1876 à 1885.'

† Cattier, 'Droit et Administration de l'État Indépendant du Congo' (1896), p. 21.

tained the other for two days, and helped him with passage to Banana ; but apparently there was no more interchange of information about their several enterprises than was unavoidable.*

The Planting of Leopoldville.

It was not until the end of July, 1881, more than eight months later, that Mr. Stanley, after forcing his way through jungles and over mountains, came within sight of Stanley Pool, and there, on its north-west corner, he was met by three West African Negroes in French uniform, who showed him M. de Brazza's treaty with Makoko. The inquiries he made led to his being satisfied that M. de Brazza's prior claim to the north side of the river could not be disputed, but that the southern side was still open to negotiations and he found opportunity for starting them by renewing friendship with a native, originally a slave, with whom he had sworn blood-brotherhood in 1877, and who, he reported, "during the four years that had elapsed, had become a great man." This person, now known as Ngalyema of Kintamo, "grown rich by ivory trade and become powerful by investing his large profits in slaves, guns, and gunpowder," had usurped the chieftainship and aspired to widespread dominion. "He was about thirty-four years old," wrote Mr. Stanley, "of well-built form, proud in his bearing, covetous and grasping in disposition, and, like all other lawless barbarians, prone to be cruel and sanguinary whenever he might safely vent his evil humour. This was the man in whose hands the destinies of the Association International du Congo were held, and upon whose graciousness depended our only hope of being able to effect a peaceful lodgment on the Upper Congo."†

Many risks had to be run and many subterfuges resorted to before Ngalyema's support could be secured ; and even after that it transpired that Ngalyema had sold more than he had either right or power to dispose of, and that Makoko —although his claim to lordship on the southern side may

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 231-34. † *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 292-300, 305.

have been visionary—was also in a position "to decide the future of the Congo State," and must also be humoured and frightened.* All initial difficulties were overcome, however, by the beginning of November. By the beginning of April, 1882, the station of Leopoldville had been established at the entrance to Stanley Pool, and its founder was able to explore the country up to Lake Leopold, which he had discovered before illness obliged him to leave the management of affairs in the hands of subordinates while he returned to Brussels for recruitment on the voyage and for instructions as to further proceedings.

The Development of King Leopold's Plans.

M. de Brazza was not the only rival who had been visiting Congoland since Mr. Stanley left Europe in 1878; foremost among many being two Portuguese travellers, Brito Capello and Roberto Ivens, whose enterprise was partly patriotic in their journeying through what is now the northern part of Angola and the valley of the Kwango up to its junction with the Kasai and further eastward into Katanga. "Much mystery still prevails," the British consul at Loanda had reported in May, 1880, "as to the object of Mr. Stanley's expedition by the reticence he observed to all those who have conversed with him, and the consequence is that rumours are circulated which remove the belief that his mission is purely of a humane and philanthropic character."† Those rumours became much more plentiful, and justification for them was increased, before the end of September, 1882, when Mr. Stanley arrived in Brussels and conferred with the Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo.

"Unless we are prepared to relinquish our discoveries and the moral success we have gained," he then pointed out, "we have to secure all the rights that the native chiefs can endow us with, that we may exercise the political power necessary for guaranteeing the permanency of the

* 'The Congo,' Vol. II., pp. 327-32.

† 'Parliamentary Papers,' Slave Trade, No. 1 (1881), p. 155.

benefits we have sought to obtain." Without a railroad connecting the lower with the upper river, however, "the Congo Basin was not worth a two-shilling piece," he urged, and, "to render it even prospectively valuable, you must first have a charter from Europe that you shall be permitted to build that railroad, that you shall govern the land through which it passes, that, in short, the guardianship of it shall not pass into the hands of any Power but your own."* Those and his other proposals being agreed to, and promises given that they should be acted upon as promptly and completely as possible by the Comité d'Études du Haut-Congo, which soon afterwards began to style itself the Association International du Congo, Mr. Stanley hurried back to do in Africa his share of the work, and he was at Banana again on 20th December, 1882.

Mr. Stanley's Second Congo Expedition.

There, however, he learnt that nearly everything had gone wrong in his absence. The officers left at Vivi and at Leopoldville had deserted their posts. Stores had been stolen, and storehouses, harbours, and other buildings allowed to rot. Time was thus wasted and loss incurred. But, with the help of the fourteen additional Europeans he had brought out, Mr. Stanley re-arranged matters more or less to his satisfaction along the 223 miles of river already taken charge of by him between Vivi and Leopoldville, and, before the end of 1883, several new stations were established in the Middle Congo, the last being at Stanley Falls, 1,068 miles beyond Leopoldville. This second task, though covering a much greater distance, was far easier than the first, the river being navigable all the way. It was not achieved without some fighting. But, as Mr. Stanley was now laying the foundations for dominion over millions of blacks by a few white men, he saw the importance of more conciliatory tactics than he had adopted when he was merely passing down the stream in 1887, and he had no difficulty in securing blood-brotherhood even

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 463.

with the chief of the Bangala, "the insensate furies of savageland," whom he had hunted down and been hunted by six years before.

Stanley Falls and the Arab Slave-Raiders.

On approaching Stanley Falls in November, 1883, Mr. Stanley heard that the dwellers near it had been harassed by slave-raiders, and some of these he overtook a few days later, when he found that they were so-called Arabs from Nyangwe and followers of Tipu-Tipu, who had conducted him part of the way thither in 1876. At that time Tipu-Tipu refused to carry out his bargain with the white explorer, as he feared to wander so far into a strange and perilous country. But he and his followers were not slow in turning to account the experience acquired by them. "After the return of Tipu to Nyangwe from escorting me to Vinya Njara," Mr. Stanley reported, "they made their approaches slowly towards the Falls. Thus they had obtained access to a large island between the Falls, from which, by dint of the exhibition of power coupled with an affectation of leniency, even friendship, towards those who were willing to submit to their impositions, they had succeeded in at last securing the co-operation of the Wenya fishermen"—that is, the natives near the highest cataract who, with the Baswa and Wane Rukura fishermen lower down, floated their canoes past all the seven cataracts. "At the seventh," according to Mr. Stanley, "the Wenya fishermen stood ready to navigate them safely through the channels to the head of the navigation leading to Stanley Pool. On their return with their forcibly acquired booty a few slaves whom they were glad to be rid of sufficed to pay the Wenya, Wane Rukura, and Baswa tribes for the trouble of passing their flotilla up in safety to the quiet river leading to Nyangwe." The particular "horde of banditti" whom Mr. Stanley now met consisted chiefly of the Manyema slaves of Abed-bin-Salim, who had invaded and ravaged the country to obtain slaves and ivory for their masters, and were "under the leader-

ship of several chiefs, but principally under Karema and Kiburuga." Leaving the neighbourhood of Vinya Njara sixteen months before, "for eleven months the band had been raiding successfully between the Congo and the Lubiranzi, on the left bank," and "had then undertaken to perform the same cruel work between the Welle and Wane Kirundu," on the right bank of the river. When Mr. Stanley met them they had about 2,300 slaves—women and children—and about 2,000 tusks of ivory.*

In 1883 Mr. Stanley, drawing a lurid picture of the "devilish deeds" of which he saw traces in a "naked land, raided and devastated in this cruel fashion," used much stronger language in condemnation of their perpetrators than he had found occasion for in 1876. But he had friendly relations with them and, unmindful of the mishap resulting from his having introduced the marauders to this part of Congoland, he added to it another blunder. "For reasons of polity," he wrote, "I set about persuading the chiefs to send with us to the coast a few of their confidential men, that they might witness for themselves what influences were advancing up the river on whose banks they had created such widespread havoc. It appeared to me the best mode of suggesting to them, rather than saying so in many words, that it would be wiser to abstain from committing their sanguinary battues than to risk meeting some day a gunboat with a police-force on board, who probably might deal summarily with such a slave-raiding band as we had found housed so openly on the river banks. Meantime, they could send specimens of their ivory and obtain a few necessaries of which, perhaps, they were in need. They accepted the proposal, and they accordingly sent ten of their confidential slaves with three tusks each."† No surer plan could have been devised for quickening and strengthening the encroachments of Tipu-Tipu and his colleagues which wrought so much havoc in later years.

* 'The Congo,' Vol. II., pp. 138-54. † *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 168.

In January, 1884, Mr. Stanley, having concluded the work he had undertaken, was at Leopoldville again, on the journey back to Europe which he was anxious to complete. But he was detained four months by fresh troubles that had broken out at Vivi and some other stations, and by the failure of the Brussels authorities to provide him, as they had promised, with a principal assistant, competent to succeed him as chief administrator, "a person who not only could work himself and loyally perform his duty, but who could inspire other men to loyally execute each his special trust and mission." Of the first "superior person" sent out all we are told is that he "made only a short stay at Vivi, but his reign had been a singularly unhappy one." General Gordon was next thought of, and on 6th January he wrote to Mr. Stanley, "I will serve willingly with or under you, and I hope you will stay on, and we will, God helping, kill the slave traders in their haunt." But Gordon was sent to Khartum instead of Leopoldville, and had the proposal been carried out it would have been unwelcome to Mr. Stanley, who feared the issue would be that "we are to abandon the Congo and be diverted from our work of settling, extending, and consolidating along this river to make raids upon Sudanese slave traders in the Nile Basin." A more suitable administrator was found, however, in Sir Francis de Winton, who reached Vivi in May, and Mr. Stanley was able to report himself to King Leopold early in August.*

Mr. Stanley's Final Arrangements.

He brought with him, as he averred, "treaties made with over 450 independent African chiefs, whose rights would be conceded by all to have been indisputable, since they held their lands by undisturbed occupation, by long ages of succession, by real divine right," and who, "of their own free will, without coercion, but for substantial considerations, reserving only a few easy conditions, had

Mr. Stanley's "Indisputable Treaties."

* 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 467; Vol. II., pp. 187, 226, 237.

transferred their rights of sovereignty and of ownership to the Association." In so far as a general inference can be drawn from the few specimens of these 450 treaties which have been printed, they imply very extensive surrender of native rights, but at the same time they pledge the Association "to promote to its utmost the prosperity of the country," and "to protect its inhabitants from all oppression," and in one typical case it is laid down that "the term 'cession of territory' does not mean purchase of the soil by the Association, but the purchase of the suzerainty by the Association and its just acknowledgment by the chiefs."* As regards one at least of the more important chiefs with whom treaties were arranged, moreover, Ngalyema of Kintamo, on whose territory Leopoldville was built, it is admitted that he was an upstart slave, whose chieftainship had been usurped, and certainly did not come to him by "undisturbed occupation" or "long ages of succession," whatever may have been his "real divine right."

As regards another treaty, which was abandoned after the exposure of its character, we have a report from the British consul at Loanda, who, on 6th November, 1883, informed his Government that the Belgian officer in charge of Vivi had in the previous January proceeded to Palabala, a large inland town to the south of Noki, in which the Dutch Trading Company and the Livingstone Inland Mission had stations, and had there "made a treaty with the princes and chiefs of that district." He added, "The chiefs, to whom the treaty was correctly translated by the agent of the Dutch house and the missionaries, were much surprised at the conditions, and declared that they never understood the full meaning of the treaty imposed upon them, that they had no wish to sell their lands on those terms, that they were given to understand that the expedition intended to establish a factory, and not that they were to prohibit others putting trading houses in their

* 'The Congo,' Vol. II., pp. 195-206, 379.

district, or to be called upon for men to construct roads, &c. The chiefs, on the advice of the Dutch agent, who offered to be responsible for the value of the articles paid, returned the contract to M. Vandevelde, and told him that they would not accept or agree to the treaty. An attempt was made by that officer to enforce acceptance of the treaty by placing an armed force of about twenty to thirty Zanzibaris in the town and stopping all communications with Noki. But, seeing that most of the inhabitants left their huts and abandoned the town, he withdrew his men and returned to Vivi; since when matters have resumed their old footing and continue as formerly." In another letter of the same date the same consul, forwarding copies of two other treaties, reported that "great distrust is felt by all classes of people here and in the Congo as to whether the aim and intentions of the King of the Belgians or the Association are strictly carried out, as, by the treaties or contracts that have been entered into, two of which I enclose, the expedition not only reserves to itself the exclusive right of trade and other measures tantamount to sovereignty, but excludes the establishment of any trading factory, or the cession of any land to anyone whatsoever, without the sanction or approval of the agent of the Comité." "In the Congo," he added, "the native chiefs are made to do exactly as the Europeans require by means of rum and cloth."*

Most of the treaties were probably, however, as valid as such documents generally are, implying as they do the assent of native communities to the surrender or weakening of their rights and privileges by chiefs not competent to take such action, and not themselves aware of the consequences of their rash proceeding. Whether valid or

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1884), pp. 57-63, and No. 5 (1884), pp. 1-5. The "rum and cloth" paid for the Palabala cession of territory were "one coat of red cloth with gold facings, one red cap, one white tunic, one piece of white baft, one piece of red points, one 1-dozen box of liqueurs, 4 demijohns of rum, 2 boxes of gin, 128 bottles of gin (Hollands), 20 pieces of red handkerchiefs, 40 singlets, and 40 old cotton caps."

invalid, moreover, they were serviceable in emphasising the now urgent demand of the Association International du Congo for the international recognition which was necessary to the continuance of its work.

French and Portuguese Competition.

After his meeting with Mr. Stanley in November, 1880, his visit to Europe, and his return to the Gaboon, with 1,275,000 francs placed to his credit by the French Government in January, 1883, M. de Brazza had occupied himself for some time in other explorations nearer the coast, especially in the hope of finding a route between it and Brazzaville, by way of the Kwilu-Niari river, which would avoid the cataracts of the Lower Congo. With a view to checking this activity Mr. Stanley, immediately after his arrival at Vivi, had sent an expedition "to secure to the Association a wide stretch of inland country and an extent of coast line between the French territory on the Gaboon and the *débouchure* of the Congo, as a free alternative route to the Upper Congo."* The compromise ultimately arrived at was more favourable to France than to the Congo Association. But the fresh rivalry here going on, in dangerous proximity to the unauthorised Portuguese settlement in Kabinda, so much alarmed the Portuguese Government that it revived its intermittent appeals, dating from 1845, for British assistance in securing to Portugal possession of the coast and country north of Ambriz up to the Congo, and along the southern bank of the river as far as Noki, which is almost opposite to Vivi.

The Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1884.

As the result of more than a year of correspondence, in the course of which the British Government insisted on stringent provisions for securing equality of trading rights to all nations, on absolute freedom in the navigation of the Congo, and on recognition of the interests acquired by the Association International du Congo, as

* Cattier, p. 22; 'The Congo,' Vol. I., pp. 471-76; 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1884), p. 23.

well as on the suppression of every form of slavery, a preliminary Congo Treaty was signed by the two States on 26th February, 1884, subject to its being approved by the other Powers.*

United States Intervention.

This approval not being accorded, the treaty was abandoned, and a substitute for it was found by the Berlin International Conference summoned in the autumn of 1884. Before that, however, use was made of the controversy to advance the claims of King Leopold's great venture to national rank, and to this end General Sanford, who had been King Leopold's zealous supporter and agent from the first, exerted strong influence in the United States. Reminding his countrymen that Mr. Stanley was himself an American citizen, General Sanford induced them to take the lead in objecting not only to the Anglo-Portuguese Congo Treaty, but also to the adoption of any other treaty that might be unsatisfactory to the Association. He asked for more than that too. "The work which the King of the Belgians has taken under his especial personal and financial protection," he wrote to a senator on 24th March, 1884, "has developed to extraordinary proportions and has had for practical result the opening up to civilising influences and to the world's traffic of this vast, populous, and fertile region, and securing certain destruction to the slave trade wherever its flag floats. The only practical difficulty in this wonderful progress proves to be an unrecognised flag, which is liable to be misunderstood or abused, and the people under it subjected to impediments in their philanthropic work on the part of those engaged in the slave trade, or for other selfish ends."†

It was in consequence of specious representations of that sort, put forward by other apologists as well as by General Sanford, that, on 22nd April, 1884, the United States Government exchanged declarations with the Inter-

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 2 and No. 5 (1884), *passim*.

† 'The Congo,' Vol. I., p. 37.

national Association, on the strength of which the latter assumed the dignity and power of a civilised State. "In harmony with the traditional policy of the United States, which enjoins a proper regard for the commercial interests of their citizens, while at the same time avoiding interference with controversies between other Powers, as well as alliances with foreign nations," the Washington document declared, "the Government of the United States announces its sympathy with and approval of the humane and benevolent purposes of the International Association of the Congo, administering as it does the interests of the Free States there established, and will order the officers of the United States, both on land and sea, to recognise the flag of the International African Association as the flag of a friendly Government."*

No Free States had then, or have yet, been established in Congoland, although the International Association took to itself a new name as the Congo Free State on 1st August, 1885. But the United States Government accepted in April, 1884, as did other Governments afterwards, the assurance in the Association's declaration that, "by treaties with the legitimate sovereigns in the basins of the Congo and of the Niari-Kwilu, and in adjacent territories upon the Atlantic, there had been ceded to it the territory for the use and benefit of Free States established and being established, under the care and supervision of the said Association, in the said basins and adjacent territories to which cession the said Free States of right succeed."†

As fanciful or misleading were such other assertions, in the same document, as that "the said Association and the said States guarantee to foreigners settling in their territories the right to purchase, sell, or lease lands and buildings situated therein, to establish commercial houses,

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Protocols and General Act of the West African Conference (1885), p. 263.

† *Ibid.*, p. 262.

and to carry on trade, under the sole condition that they shall obey the laws," and that "they pledge themselves never to grant to the citizens of one nation any advantages without immediately extending the same to all other nations, and to do all in their power to prevent the slave trade." But the declaration signed on 22nd April, 1884, by Colonel Sanford, as representative of the Association, answered its purpose and gave new shape and strength to the project of King Leopold which had been growing since 1876.

CHAPTER III.

The Berlin Conference [1884–5].

THE recognition of the Congo Association as "a friendly Government" by the United States on 22nd April, 1884, was one of the measures avowedly taken in opposition to the tentative Anglo-Portuguese treaty of 26th February.

France and the Congo Association.

Another measure, taken immediately afterwards, was an agreement between France and the Association by which their rivalries were for a time adjusted. "In the name of the stations and free territories it has founded on the Congo and in the Niari-Kwilu valley," Colonel Strauch wrote to M. Jules Ferry on 23rd April, "the International Association of the Congo formally declares that, subject to any special conventions that may be arranged between France and the Association fixing the limits and conditions of their respective action, it will not cede them to any other Power. Nevertheless the Association, desiring to give fresh proof of its friendly feeling towards France, undertakes to give it the right of preference if, through unforeseen circumstances, the Association is one day obliged to part with its possessions." "I take note of these declarations with great satisfaction," M. Ferry replied on 24th April, "and have the honour to inform you that the French Government undertakes to respect the stations and free territories of the Association, and to place no obstacle in the exercise of its rights."*

German Opposition to Portuguese Proposals.

Meanwhile the Anglo-Portuguese treaty was being protested against by English as well as by foreign Chambers of Commerce, and these protests supported Prince Bismarck in his pursuance, as regards the Congo, of the

* Cattier, pp. 74-5.

colonial policy that had lately arisen in Germany. "We are not in a position," it was written on his behalf to the British Government on 7th June, "to admit that the Portuguese or any other nation has a previous right there. We have the fear which, as Earl Granville admits, has been expressed by merchants of all nations that the action of Portuguese officials would be prejudicial to trade; and for this reason we cannot take part in any scheme for handing over to Portuguese officials the administration, or even the direction, of these arrangements. Even the provision for limiting the dues to a maximum of ten per cent., the basis of the Mozambique tariff"—which Lord Granville had agreed to for the Congo—"would not be a sufficient protection against the disadvantages that the commercial world rightly anticipates would ensue from an extension of the Portuguese colonial system over territories which have hitherto been free."*

Germany and the Congo Association.

In consequence of that letter, supplementing so much other opposition, the British Government on 26th June declined to ratify the treaty with Portugal, and soon afterwards assented to an alternative proposal, which had been made earlier in the year by the Lisbon authorities to the French Government, and approved both by it and by the German Government, in favour of an International Conference to deal with the Congo question as well as with other West African affairs now claiming attention, and especially the Niger question. It was substantially agreed to among the three Powers that the establishment of a Free State in the basin of the Congo should be sanctioned and assisted by them, and that all the other Powers concerned, while left free to make their separate conventions with King Leopold, should be invited to join in laying down the general principles. These were outlined in a despatch from Prince Bismarck to the Baron de Courcel, dated 13th September, in which he said: "Like France, the German

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 7 (1884), p. 2.

Government will observe a friendly attitude towards the Belgian enterprises on the banks of the Congo, owing to the desire of the two Governments to secure to their countrymen freedom of trade throughout the whole of the future Congo State, and in the districts which France holds on this river and which she proposes to assimilate to the liberal system which that State is expected to establish." Invitations were accordingly issued for the Conference of Berlin, which held its first sitting on 15th November, 1884, and the tenth and last on 26th January, 1885, and at which fourteen Powers were represented—Germany, France, Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Sweden and Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Turkey, and the United States of America. To these was added, at the final sitting, the newly recognised International Association of the Congo.*

The Berlin Conference.

"In convoking the Conference," Prince Bismarck announced when he opened the proceedings as its president, "the Imperial Government was guided by the conviction that all the Governments invited agreed in wishing to bring the natives of Africa within the pale of civilisation by opening up the interior of that continent to commerce, by giving its inhabitants the means of instructing themselves, by encouraging missions and enterprises calculated to spread useful knowledge, and by preparing the way for the suppression of slavery, and especially of the over-sea traffic in blacks, the gradual abolition of which was proclaimed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815 as the sacred duty of all the Powers." "The interest taken by all the nations here represented," he further remarked, "an interest unceasingly shown by bold feats of exploration, by commercial movements, and by the sacrifices and efforts made by each nation with one of these objects, affords a guarantee of the success of the labours which we are about to under-

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), Protocols and General Act of the West African Conference.

take in order to regulate and develop the commercial relations of our countrymen with that continent, and to render a service to the cause both of peace and of humanity."*

At the second meeting of the Conference the prominent part taken by the United States Government in supporting the International Association was explained by Mr. Kasson, the American Minister at Brussels, and General Sanford's fellow-representative of their country at the Conference. Referring to the help given towards bringing "the light of civilisation" to "this obscure region" by Mr. Stanley, "an American citizen who was qualified by courage, perseverance, and intelligence, and by a remarkable intrepidity and aptitude in exploration," Mr. Kasson expressed "the earnest desire of his Government that these discoveries should be utilised for the civilisation of the native races and for the abolition of the slave trade." As regards the declaration in favour of the Congo Association in April by the United States, its President, said Mr. Kasson, "believes that, in thus recognising the only dominant flag in that country, he acted in the common interest of civilised nations; he regards this local Government, or any successor resting on the same bases of principle, as an assurance that the dangers of international violence will be averted, that the enormity of the slave traffic will be suppressed, that the blacks will learn from it that the civilisation and the dominion of the white man mean for them peace and freedom, and the development of useful commerce, free to all the world."† As precise, and in some instances more detailed, were the utterances of other representatives in discussing and agreeing upon the proposals affecting the Congo Basin that were ultimately embodied in twenty-five out of the thirty-eight articles of the General Act of the Berlin Conference which, "in the name of Almighty God," was signed on

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), pp. 9, 10.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24.

26th February, and ratified by all but the United States Government on 19th April, 1886.*

The Berlin General Act.

Some of these articles, providing for an International Navigation Commission of the Congo, were subsequently abandoned, and others, including those dealing with the Niger and other subjects, do not here concern us. But the stipulations as regards freedom of trade and protection of natives in the Congo Basin must be clearly understood and carefully borne in mind.

Its Free Trade Provision.

The first article laid it down that, throughout "the basin of the Congo, its mouths and circumjacent regions," "the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom"; the second, that "all flags, without distinction of nationality," shall have free access "to all coasts, rivers, lakes, and canals within the regions marked out, and to any ports thereon"; the third, that "merchandise, of whatever origin, imported into these regions, under whatsoever flag, whether by sea, by river or overland, shall be subject to no other taxes than such as may be levied as fair compensation for expenditure in the interest of trade, and these taxes for that reason must be equally borne by the people themselves and by foreigners of all nationalities, all differential dues on vessels, as well as on merchandise, being forbidden"; and the fourth, that "merchandise imported into these regions shall be free from entry and transit dues, the Powers reserving to themselves the right of deciding, after the lapse of twenty years, whether the freedom of import shall be retained or not."

The arguments put forward by the committee that reported on this branch of the subject are noteworthy. "The Powers are in the presence of three interests," it was pointed out; "that of the commercial and industrial

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 3 (1886), p. 21. The refusal of the United States Government to ratify the Act was due not to disapproval of it, but, as the United States had no territorial interests in Africa, to its unwillingness to assume international responsibilities that might be troublesome.

nations whom a common necessity impels to the search for new outlets; that of the States and Powers called upon to exercise over the regions of the Congo an authority which will have burdens corresponding with their rights; and, lastly, that which some generous voices have already commended to your solicitude, the interests of the native populations. The system which will result from the deliberations of the Conference ought to be so arranged that, while rendering to the other interests the part that is their due, it may tend above all to stimulate among people still undeveloped a taste for labour, to facilitate their acquisition of the implements required by them and of articles of prime necessity which they lack, to hasten, in fact, their advance towards a better social condition. It is not by imposing custom house charges on imports that these various interests will be satisfied. The custom house system requires premises, establishments, and a staff of officials absorbing most of the revenue. In vast countries, where communications are rare or imperfect, where traffic is carried on by primitive or special methods, where, in fact, administrative machinery is to a large extent wanting, reason and experience alike are in favour of great freedom of action being allowed to commerce. It may be hoped that, aided by a broad system of liberties and guarantees, an important flow of business will speedily be produced throughout the regions of the Congo. That is the end to be kept in view before all else. The realisation of this all-important factor would develop both the traffic and the resources of Equatorial Africa in every kind; it would compensate, even from the fiscal point of view, for the sacrifice of import duties, and at the same time, by another and a happy consequence, it would tend to the benefit of the native populations. In the present case, which is perhaps without precedent in the commercial history of the world, it will undoubtedly be prudent not to fetter the future for ever. When the impetus has been given, and serious progress has been made, fresh prospects and nece

sities will probably reveal themselves, and the time may arrive when wise foresight will demand revision of a system which has been more especially adapted to a period of creation and transformation."*

Its Prohibition of Monopolies.

In the fifth article of the Berlin General Act it was stipulated that "no Power which exercises or may exercise sovereign rights in the above-mentioned regions shall be allowed to grant therein either monopoly or privilege of any kind in commercial matters; foreigners, without distinction, shall enjoy protection of their persons and goods, as well as the right of acquiring and transferring moveable and immoveable property, and the same treatment and rights as subjects of the nation in the exercise of their professions." As question arose at the Conference as to the precise meaning of the first clause of this article, and as it has since acquired enormous importance, the words of the committee responsible for it, of which the Baron de Courcel and Baron Lambermont were the principal members, are worth noting. "No doubt whatever exists," it was stated, "as to the strict and literal sense that should be assigned to the term 'en matière commerciale.' It refers exclusively to traffic, to the unlimited power of every one to sell and buy, to import and to export natural produce and manufactured articles. No privileged situation can be created in this respect; the way remains open without any restriction to free competition in the sphere of commerce, but the obligations of the local Government do not go beyond that. Etymology and usage assign to the expression 'monopole' a wider signification than to that of 'privilège.' Monopoly conveys the idea of an exclusive right; privilege does not necessarily go so far as that. The words 'd'aucune espèce' evidently apply to monopoly as well as to privilege, but with the general restriction of their application to the domain of commerce." "To develop commerce," it was added, "it is not enough

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), pp. 64, 65.

to open ports and dispense with custom house barriers. Without merchants there is no commerce. If one wishes to attract merchants to distant and as yet imperfectly known countries, it is necessary to surround with guarantees that which is of essential interest to them, their persons, their goods, the acquisition of property, rights or inheritance, and the practice of professions."*

Its Prescriptions as regards Natives.

No less momentous, and no less abused in recent years, was the provision in the sixth article that "all the Powers exercising sovereign rights or influence in the aforesaid territories pledge themselves to watch over the preservation of the native populations and the improvement of their moral and material conditions of existence, and to work together for the suppression of slavery, and especially of the slave trade." "With regard to these native populations," the Baron de Courcel's and Baron Lambermont's committee reported, "who for the most part certainly ought not to be regarded as outside the pale of international law, but who in the present state of affairs are scarcely able to defend their own interests, the Conference must assume the position of an official guardian. The necessity of ensuring the preservation of the natives, the duty of helping them to attain a higher political and social status, the obligation to instruct them and initiate them in the advantages of civilisation, are unanimously recognised. The very future of Africa is here at stake. No difference of opinion on this point has been or can be manifested in the committee. Two loads weigh down the actual condition of the African peoples and paralyse their development—slavery and the slave trade. Every one knows, and Mr. Stanley's testimony only confirms the general opinion, that slavery has deeply rooted itself in the constitution of African society. Assuredly this pernicious institution must disappear. That is the essential condition of all economic and political

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), p. 65.

progress; but tact and gradual transition will be indispensable. It is enough to point to the end; the local Governments must find out the means and adapt them to circumstances of time and place. The slave trade has another character; it is the negation of all law, of all social order. Man-hunting is an act of treason against humanity. It must be suppressed wherever this is possible, on land as well as on sea. The events of which the Egyptian Sudan is at present the theatre, the scenes that Mr. Stanley has recently witnessed on the banks of the Upper Congo, the abominable expeditions which, according to Dr. Nachtigal, are frequently organised in the Central Sudan, and which are already penetrating into the basin of the Congo, call for an intervention which the local powers will be bound to undertake as a pressing duty and a sacred mission."*

Prince Bismarck's Conclusions.

These and other questions having occupied the Berlin Conference during more than two months, Prince Bismarck was able, at the last sitting, to congratulate its members on the "complete accord" at which they had arrived. "The resolutions that we are on the point of sanctioning," he said, "secure to the commerce of all nations free access to the centre of the African continent. The guarantees which will be provided for freedom of trade in the Congo Basin are of a nature to offer to the commerce and industry of all nations the conditions most favourable to their development and security. By another series of regulations you have shown your solicitude for the moral and material well-being of the native populations, and there is ground for hoping that these principles, adopted in a spirit of wise moderation, will bear fruit and help to introduce to them the benefits of civilisation. The special conditions existing in the vast regions that you are opening up to commercial enterprise have also required special safeguards for the maintenance of peace and public

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), pp. 65, 66.

order. The scourge of war would, indeed, assume a particularly disastrous character if the natives were led to take part in conflicts between civilised powers. Justly mindful of the dangers which such a contingency might bring to the interests of commerce and civilisation, we have sought means to withdraw a great part of Africa from the vicissitudes of general politics by restricting national rivalries to the peaceful competition of trade and industry."*

As at this meeting the concurrence of the International Association of the Congo with the proceedings of the Conference was formally tendered, and permission given to its representatives to sign the General Act now awaiting completion, Prince Bismarck "paid homage to the noble efforts of His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the founder of a work now recognised by nearly all the Powers, the consolidation of which should confer precious services on the cause of humanity," and he concluded by saying, "I believe I express the views of the Conference when I acknowledge with satisfaction the step taken by the International Association of the Congo, and in accepting its adhesion to our regulations. The new Congo State is called upon to become one of the chief promoters of the work we have in view, and I pray for its prosperous development and for the fulfilment of the noble aspirations of its illustrious founder."†

The Establishment of the Congo State.

The new Congo State did not formally take to itself that title till six months later, on 1st August, 1885. But in the interval all preparations were made for it.

The recognition of the Congo Association as "a friendly Government" by the United States in April, 1884, and the less explicit intimations of France and Germany to the same effect, had been followed, before the opening of the Berlin Conference, by a Convention between the

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), p. 286.
† *Ibid.*, pp. 287, 289.

German Empire and the Association, dated 8th November, in which the flag, the territories, the rights, and the privileges claimed by the latter were agreed to by the former. While the Conference was sitting, moreover, similar Conventions were made with Great Britain on 16th December, with Italy on 19th December, with Austria-Hungary on 24th December, with the Netherlands on 27th December, with Spain on 7th January, with the French Republic and with the Russian Empire on 5th February, with Sweden and Norway on 10th February, with Portugal on 14th February, and with Denmark on 23rd February. On the last-named day also declarations were exchanged between the Association and the Belgian Government.*

Its Convention with European Powers.

All these treaties, though varying in terms, were substantially to the same effect, most of them having articles similar to those in the Anglo-Congo Convention, which provided that "British subjects shall have at all times the right of sojourning and of establishing themselves within the territories which are or shall be under the government of the Association; they shall enjoy the same protection which is accorded to the subjects or citizens of the most favoured nation in all matters which regard their persons, their property, the free exercise of their religion, and the rights of navigation, commerce, and industry; especially they shall have the right of buying, of selling, of letting, and of hiring lands and buildings, mines and forests, situated within the said territories, and of founding houses of commerce, and of carrying on commerce and a coasting trade under the British flag"; and that "every British consul or consular officer within the said territories, who shall be duly authorised by Her Britannic Majesty's Government, may hold a consular court for the district assigned to him, and shall exercise sole and exclusive jurisdiction, both civil and

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 4 (1885), pp. 262-78.

criminal, over the persons and property of British subjects within the same, in accordance with British law."

The Congo-French Convention assigned to France the disputed basin of the Kwilu and the left bank of the Congo from Stanley Pool as far north-eastward as its explorations had then reached, but it left the Association in possession of its Banana, Boma, and Cataracts districts. The Congo-Portuguese Convention, mainly brought about through the good offices of the British Government assigned to Portugal the territory south of the Congo as far as Noki and of the parallel of Noki up to its intersection by the river Kwango, which was from that point to serve as the boundary in a southerly direction. The territorial arrangements of these Conventions were subsequently modified, and Germany and England have since acquired those portions of the Congo Basin which are to the east of Lake Tanganyika and its parallel north and south. But the Berlin General Act and the Conventions contemporaneous with it placed the Association in assumed ownership of about two-thirds of the 1,500,000 or more square miles of the Congo Basin, two-thirds of the rest being still unclaimed, and the recognised shares of France and Portugal at that time being respectively little more than 60,000 and 30,000 square miles.

Its Arrangements with Belgium.

"There can be no doubt," says the historian of the Congo Free State, "that the country most surprised by the result of the Berlin Conference was Belgium."* The schemes and negotiations by which it was brought about had been watched eagerly by a few, but "public opinion remained indifferent and incredulous." Even when it was known that the Belgian Government had, on 23rd February, 1885, followed the example of other Powers and recognised the flag of the Association as "on an equality with that of a friendly State" but little interest was aroused. Astonishment was great when, on 16th April, King Leopold publicly

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendent du Congo,' p. 35.

informed his Ministers that he desired the immediate assent of the Chambers to his becoming the Sovereign of the Association, in accordance with the 62nd article of the Belgian Constitution, which provides that "the King cannot be at the same time Sovereign of another State without the consent of both Chambers," and that "neither Chamber can deliberate on this subject unless at least two-thirds of its members are present, and the resolution can only be adopted by at least two-thirds of the votes." However, the Chamber of Deputies on 28th April, and the Senate two days later, each with only one dissentient, acceded to the request, subject to an amendment declaring that "His Majesty Leopold II., King of the Belgians"—instead of merely "the King," as the Government had proposed—"is authorised to be Chief of the State founded in Africa by the International Association of the Congo"; and it was added, "The union between Belgium and the new Congo State will be exclusively personal."* The effect of this modified resolution was that, on King Leopold's demise, his successor on the Belgian throne could only become Chief of the Congo State by fresh sanction from Parliament. It also, as far as clumsily or cleverly chosen words could go, preserved the individuality and independence of both States and shielded each from responsibility for the other's actions.

The setting up of the Congo State, under its new name, with despotic powers to its founder only limited by the conditions imposed by the Berlin Conference, was completed by a letter which King Leopold addressed on 1st August to each of the heads of the States represented at that Conference. "Your Majesty's Government," he wrote, "has recognised the flag of the International Association of the Congo as that of a friendly State. At the time of the signature of the General Act of the Berlin Conference the president and members of that august assembly, in accepting the Association's adhesion to the

* Cattier, pp. 84-6.

work of the Conference, expressed their sympathy with its undertaking. Now that the position of the Association is fixed from an international point of view, that its territorial constitution is established, and that its mission has received precious encouragements, I am able to acquaint your Majesty and your Government that the possessions of the Congo International Association will henceforth constitute the Congo Free State. I have at the same time to inform your Majesty and your Government that, authorised by the Belgian Legislative Chambers to become Chief of the new State, I have, by agreement with the Association, taken the title of Sovereign of the Congo Free State. The union between Belgium and this State will be exclusively personal. The new State, I have full confidence, will answer the expectations of the Powers that have, in some sort, welcomed in advance its entry into the family of nations. I have full confidence that the new State will show itself worthy of the good opinion of all the Powers. I shall exert myself to guide it in this path."*

On the same day, moreover, formal notice was given to the Powers who had signed the Berlin General Act that the Congo Free State "declared itself for ever neutral, and claimed for itself the advantages guaranteed by the Act, while taking on itself the obligations incident to neutrality."†

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 36.

† *Ibid.*, p. 37.

CHAPTER IV.

The Congo State's Commencement [1885-1889].

"A NEW State has been founded, its limits are fixed, and its flag is recognised by almost all the Powers," King Leopold had written to his Belgian Ministers on 16th April, 1885. "There remains the duty of organising a Government and an administration on the banks of the Congo."

The Machinery of Government.

This work, in so far as immediate exigencies were concerned, and as mere promises can make a constitution, was on the whole very skilfully done during the early years of the Congo State's existence. Strictly speaking, of course, there can be no constitution under an absolute monarch, and it has been aptly said of King Leopold II. that he, as Sovereign of the Congo State, has better grounds than had the French Louis XIV. in declaring "L'État, c'est Moi." "In the Congo the Sovereign is the direct source of legislative, executive, and judiciary powers. He can, if he chooses, delegate their exercise to certain functionaries; but this delegation has no other source than his will. He regulates, to his fancy, the nature and the limits of the delegations to which he consents. He can at any moment revoke or modify them. He can issue rules on which, so long as they last, is based the validity of certain acts by himself or by his delegates. But he can cancel those rules whenever they appear to him troublesome, useless, or dangerous. The organisation of justice, the composition of the army, financial systems, and industrial and commercial institutions—all are established solely by him, in accordance with his just or faulty conceptions as to their usefulness or efficiency. With like freedom he regulates all the outside relations of the State. The appointment and reception of diplomatic and consular

agents, treaties, negotiations, alliances, the general policy of the State—all are dependent on him alone. In a word, Leopold II. possesses personally and exercises personally, apart from such delegations as he finds convenient, all the prerogatives that the law of nations recognises in Sovereign States. No constitutional rule limits the exercise of these prerogatives, although it is a fact that his will has to be subordinated to observance of any international treaties which the Congo State has concluded."*

In 1885 and afterwards, however, in lieu of the utterly irresponsible and filibustering machinery hitherto in vogue, the Congo State was provided with, such as it was, a constitution. King Leopold appointed three Administrators-General, who formed a Council of State, to advise him, as well as to carry out his instructions, on all questions that might arise. The original holders of these offices were, M. Van Eetvelde, for foreign affairs, including commerce, ports, and justice; M. Van Neuss, for finances, including land regulation as well as taxation; and Colonel Strauch, for the interior, including local administration, police, military establishments, means of communication, and much else. Until his retirement in 1901† M. (afterwards Baron) Van Eetvelde was the Sovereign's chief assistant, his title, with that of his colleagues, being changed to Secretary of State in 1891, and he being the sole Secretary of State after September, 1894. Sir Francis de Winton, who succeeded Mr. Stanley as Administrator-General on the Congo in July, 1884, with his headquarters first at Vivi and subsequently at Boma, gave place in July, 1886, to M. Camille Janssen, whose title was changed to Governor-General in April, 1887, and who held the office till 1892.

The King being the only and uncontrolled law-maker

* Cattier, pp. 134, 135, where a phrase used in a report of M. Van Eetvelde, the Secretary of State, dated 25th January, 1897, is quoted, "C'est à Votre Majesté qu'appartient l'État.'

† Even after his retirement, however, it was stipulated that Baron Van Eetvelde's "services as special adviser on all matters of importance" were retained.

for the Congo State, issuing his laws by arbitrary decrees and even reserving to himself the power of not publishing in Europe decrees which it might be thought expedient to conceal,* the Administrator-General or Governor-General—or the Deputy Governor-General or Inspector of State left in charge during the Governor-General's frequent absence in Europe—was to be his principal agent in enforcing those decrees. Under the central authority in Boma, after the seat of Government was transferred to it from Vivi, were to be the District Commissaries, each of the districts—now fifteen in number—being a "territorial administrative unit." The functions assigned to these officials were comprehensive and diverse. They were accountable for the maintenance of order over enormous areas, for the most part unexplored. They were expected not only to be detectives as well as judges, but also to administer any punishments imposed by themselves, subject to reference in serious cases to their superiors at Boma. Responsible for the finances of their districts, they had to see that sufficient revenue was collected; and, nominally required to look after the interests of both blacks and whites and to protect either class from injury by the other, they had great temptations, and opportunities as great, to set the interests of their white associates and their own before those of the natives. The abuses inevitable to the system were not, perhaps, very manifest at first, and the system itself was for some years so incomplete that minor officials had much excuse for any blunders they committed. But its ablest apologist is its severest critic. "There is no check, legislative or executive," writes M. Cattier, "upon the will of the Sovereign. The Secretary of State is all-powerful, under the monarch; and the Governor-General, albeit in the most absolute dependence on the Sovereign

Despotism and its Dangers.

* 'Bulletin Officiel de l'État Indépendant du Congo' (1886), p. 22: "Tous les actes du Gouvernement qu'il y a intérêt à rendre publics seront insérés au Bulletin Officiel." Instances of secret law-making and its malign working will be given hereafter.

and the Secretary of State, exercises his functions as absolute chief of the local administration. The will of his subordinates must, in every case, bend before his own. They must obey or be dismissed. Moreover, the Governor-General is usually a military officer of high rank, and most of his agents are of lower military grade, trained in habits of passive obedience. This system, in the hands of men of ability, has enabled rapid progress to be made. It was admirably adapted for practising 'the policy of results.' For all that, it is impossible to ignore its vices and its dangers. It is not well for the functionaries and agents of an administration to be forced into passive obedience. The directors of the State, who from Brussels or from Boma govern immense and distant territories, have not sufficient knowledge of the moral and material obstacles to the realisation of their views and projects. Their attention is concentrated on the results to be obtained. In these conditions it is inevitable that their real intentions will be liable to be misunderstood by agents to whom the orders of their chiefs are a law that must be obeyed always and without question. The system produces mistakes detrimental to the interests it is sought to promote, and occasional violations of the rights of natives and the laws of humanity."*

Extension of the State's Authority.

So each year's events proved with increasing force. At the end of 1886 there were only 254 white men in the Congo State's territory, of whom 52 were officials, 104 were traders and their clerks, and 30 were missionaries. More than half of the number were at Banana and Boma, and a third in other parts of the long frequented and comparatively small Lower Congo region. Elsewhere, with the exception of a few at Leopoldville, scarcely any were to be found besides the newly appointed District Commissaries, not yet supplied with even the pretence of a regularly armed force, and the explorers and missionaries

* Cattier, p. 217.

who were already energetic. Three years later the whole white population had only increased to 430, of whom 119 were officials, 134 were traders, and 70 were missionaries, the great majority being still in Lower Congo.* These intruders from Europe and the United States had, of course, numerous black companions, chiefly natives of the English, French, and Portuguese possessions on the West Coast, and some being Zanzibari survivors from Mr. Stanley's expedition. But Sir Francis de Winton and, in the first years of his administration, M. Janssen were mainly occupied in keeping watch over the trading operations carried on as heretofore, but more busily, between Boma and the mouth of the Congo, and in directing or encouraging the explorations by which various parts of the country were being opened up for occupation. They had, in fact, while doing what they could towards taking actual possession of the enormous tracts of country as yet only nominally held by the Congo State, to adapt to the State's requirements, and to alter or add to as seemed most desirable or proved most practicable, the arrangements already existing in the four administrative districts of Banana, Boma, Matadi, and the Cataracts, with so much as was then utilised of the fifth district of Stanley Pool.

Landholding under the State.

Most of the treaties by which Mr. Stanley alleged that 450 independent African chiefs had "transferred their rights of sovereignty and of ownership to the Association" —that is, to the Congo State—were in respect of lands in Lower Congo, already put to considerable use by the Dutch, Portuguese, French, and English traders on the river. With these latter, as well as with the natives, the State and its officials had, in the first instance, to establish as satisfactory relations as they could, while at the same time conforming, as far as they found necessary or convenient, to the stipulations of the Berlin General Act.

The earliest of the ordinances issued by Sir Francis de

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1887), p. 12; (1890), p. 34.

Winton, as Administrator-General of the Congo, consequently, was one dated 1st July, 1885, by which all "non-indigènes" claiming ownership of, or right to use, lands within the territories of the State were required to submit their titles and contracts to the Government for examination and, in the event of their being approved, for endorsement and registration. Henceforth, it was announced, "no contract or agreement with natives for occupation, under whatever title, of plots of land will be recognised or protected by the Government unless the contract or agreement has been made with the intervention of the public officer appointed by the Administrator-General, and according to rules defined by him in each particular case." And it was added, "No one has a right to occupy vacant lands without a title, or to dispossess natives of lands they occupy Vacant lands must be considered as belonging to the State."* The term "vacant lands" was open to divers interpretations, and the term "occupation," in reference to natives' land-holding, was open to grave misconstruction. But the right of natives to all the land used or possessed by them was clearly implied; and yet more emphatic was a decree of King Leopold's dated 14th September, 1886. "Lands occupied by native populations, under the authority of their chiefs," it was there laid down, "shall continue to be administered according to local customs and usages. Contracts made with natives for the acquisition or hiring of plots of land will only be recognised or allowed to be registered after they have been approved by the Administrator-General. It is for him to determine the forms and conditions to be followed in concluding such contracts. All acts or agreements are forbidden which tend to the expulsion of natives from the territories they occupy, or to deprive them, directly or indirectly, of their liberty or their means of existence."†

Although this equitable, if somewhat arbitrary, prescription was followed by a less satisfactory clause, providing

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1885), p. 30. † *Ibid.* (1886), pp. 138-40.

for the sale or letting of "the vacant lands and other lands belonging to the State which the Government may deem it convenient to alienate or let," it must be assumed that, when they began their work, the founders of the Congo State had only humane intentions towards the natives; also that they intended to abide loyally by the regulations of the Berlin General Act for complete freedom of trade. They had not gone far in their enterprise, however, before they began to find it covenient, and from their point of view, perhaps, necessary, to break away from their pledges as regards both the rights of natives and the rights of the European adventurers.

Encroachments on Natives' Land Rights.

The infringements in each direction, closely related to one another, were effected cautiously and gradually. A decree of 30th April, 1887, laid down rules for protecting the rights of individual owners of landed property, and preventing encroachments on lands belonging to the State or occupied by natives, and also for facilitating "the creation of new commercial and agricultural establishments." It was here provided that "nothing in the present decree shall affect the rights of natives recognised by previous decrees." But this was followed up on 30th June, 1887, by an ordinance of the new Governor-General, M. Janssen, assigning to a new functionary, "the Keeper of Land Titles," the charge of "everything concerning the administration of lands belonging to the State," including power to sell or let "des terres domaniales," and to license the cutting of wood, the extracting of minerals, or undertakings of any other sort, on "des terres dont la propriété privée n'a été reconnue à personne."* The assumed right of the State to all lands not actually "occupied" by natives or any other persons' "private property" was, for the first time, distinctly asserted in this decree. As throughout almost the whole of Africa, as well as in the Congo region, land tenure is for the most part tribal or communal, and

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1887), pp. 70-4, 129, 130.

not individual, and as the natives have from time immemorial considered themselves at liberty to roam about in search of game and other produce of the forests, plains, and rivers, and to settle down in more or less temporary villages wherever they find vacant and suitable spots, the claim now set up was practically one of State ownership of nearly all the land in the country, and it sanctioned proceedings altogether at variance with the decree of 14th September, 1886, which recognised local customs and usages as regards land, and forbade anything tending to deprive natives of their liberties or means of existence.

Encroachments on Natives' Liberties.

The first important step in this direction was taken, or at any rate authorised, by a decree of 25th July, 1889, ostensibly issued "with a view to preserving the race of elephants and of maintaining the rights of the State over elephants caught or killed within its domains"; a legitimate object in itself if the general advantage of the community was aimed at, but not otherwise defensible. "Elephant hunting," it was here decreed, "is forbidden throughout the territory of the State, unless by special licence," the cost of the licence being determined by the Governor-General, and infraction of the rule being punishable by heavy fines and penal servitude. In case of breach of this rule it was ordered that "the elephants thus caught or killed shall be handed over to the State or confiscated for its benefit," and it was added, "All usages and customs having the force of law and contrary to this edict are abrogated." A similar but less comprehensive decree was issued on 17th October, 1889, with reference to "the procuring of rubber, gum copal, and other vegetable products in districts where these, substances are not at present procured by natives, and which form part of the State domain."* This, however, was primarily applicable to the regions of the Upper Congo, which were now a subject of special interest and alarm, as we shall see, but not yet under much control.

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1889), pp. 169-71, 218.

In a report dated 16th July, 1891, by M. Van Eetvelde credit was asked for the humane arrangements adopted in the interests of the inhabitants. "The Government," it was asserted, "has taken special precautions to prevent spoliation of the natives and infringement of their rights by fraud or violence. The lands occupied by blacks remain under local customs; the State leaves under this rule spaces extensive enough not only for maintenance but also, in view of increase of the population, for development of their institutions." * The worst interferences with native land rights have been subsequent to the date of this report, but even when it was written it was in flagrant contradiction not only of facts, but also of edicts signed by M. Van Eetvelde himself. As misleading was an earlier report, dated 24th October, 1889, in which he asked credit for the alleged and ostensible abolition of the status of slavery throughout the territories of the Congo State. "Slavery, even domestic," he said, "cannot be officially recognised. Indeed, it is not possible for a single man in the Congo to be subject to another, since every attempt on individual liberty is accounted an offence punishable by the articles of the Penal Code. Every one is punished who, by violence, tricks, or threats, removes or causes to be removed, arbitrarily arrests or causes to be arrested, detains or causes to be detained, any person whatever; or who disposes of any persons whatever by selling them as slaves. By these general arrangements the procuring, the transport, and the detention of individuals as slaves fall under the arm of the law." †

New Forms of Slavery.

All this, it is true, was proposed in the Penal Code; just as much more was enjoined in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. But slavery was only abolished in name and forbidden as a matter of form. When the State officials were able and willing to enforce "these general arrangements," the bondsmen of black

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1891), p. 180. † *Ibid.* (1889), p. 199.

slave owners may have been taken from them, but only, or often, to fall into worse bondage under white masters; the cruellest and most plentiful employers of forced labour being generally the officials or the *protégés* of the State itself. On 8th November, 1888, a decree was issued according "special protection to the blacks." This "protection" took the form of allowing blacks, whether natives of the Congo or recruits from other parts, to be bound over for a term of seven years' service to any white masters or patrons (a term specially employed in the interests of missionaries and others) who satisfied the authorities that these blacks had voluntarily agreed to the conditions imposed upon them as regards wages and the like, and providing that the conditions should be set forth in writing. In case of ill-treatment or breach of contract the hireling was supposed to be able to obtain redress or to recover his liberty; and it was appointed that some supervision should be exercised by officers of the State over the relations between the hirelings and their masters, in the interests of the former.* It cannot be supposed, however, that, except in very rare cases, an effective check would thus be put upon any harsh treatment to which tyrannical employers might expose ignorant and unlettered natives in their service.

Contract Labour and Forced Labour.

It was professedly in the interests of natives, as well as of traders, and "to repress abuses prejudicial to the regularity and security of transport between the Upper and Lower Congo," that another decree was issued on 12th March, 1889, applying especially to the Cataracts district, in which there was always the greatest demand for labourers and carriers until the railway was opened. It was here provided that commercial societies and others wishing to recruit natives must first obtain a permit from the Governor-General, and must after that take out a licence for each native engaged, or, if the engagement was

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1888), pp. 270-5.

through a "capita" or head man, for each capita; the charges being 240 francs for an annual permit, 24 francs for not more than twenty-four recruits under one capita, and 3 francs for each labourer not engaged through a capita.* These licences and permits augmented the revenue; but it is not easy to see how they could benefit the natives, who, long after as well as before the issuing of the decree, were at the mercy of the District Commissaries, and of the capitas who were practically slave-drivers at their beck and call. "The method of collecting carriers is accomplished after this fashion," wrote Mr. Rose Troup, who entered the Congo State service in 1883, and was Mr. Stanley's principal transport officer for the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition of 1887, presently to be dealt with; "The Commissaire du District keeps at his station a record of the capitas of the surrounding country, and these capitas, according to their influence, are able to promise the service of a number of men belonging to their village. When it is necessary to obtain porters for a caravan the Commissaire sends out his interpreter to make known the fact among the leading men, who forthwith come to the station. As each man arrives he is admitted to the presence of the Commissaire, who inquires his name. 'Capita Lesa,' 'Capita Mwanga,' 'Capita Kupidi,' as the case may be, is the reply. 'How many men can you supply?' 'Thirteen,' 'Twenty-five,' 'Thirty,' answers the native, or he mentions even a larger number if he is a great man. 'When can you bring them?' 'After Nkandu market'—perhaps four or six days hence—for it is at the market that they make arrangements and obtain provisions for the beginning of their term of service. 'Very well,' asserts the Commissaire, 'here are so many pieces of cloth,' and he gives out to the capita an amount in accordance with the number of men promised; the regulation sum 'for rations,' as it is called, a sort of engagement money, being half a piece of handkerchief—that is, six squares of

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1889), pp. 66-9.

bright-coloured handkerchiefs—per man, while the capita receives for his own pay a whole piece. The Commissaire notes in his book some such entry as this: 'Capita Kupidi of Nzonsa, twenty-five men on 18th March.'"*

The State, though it controlled and assisted in the supply of labour, had not itself, except on special occasions, occupation for many carriers in the earlier years of its existence. But from the first it was in constant need of soldiers, and a decree of 5th August, 1888, had initiated the *force publique* which was to take the place of the nondescript fighting machinery that till then was all that the State's officials had at their disposal either for police or for military work. Whether employed as soldiers or otherwise, the recruiting of natives for its own use was, by a decree dated 17th November, 1888, subject to the same conditions as were appointed for others by the decree of 8th November, 1888.† In the case of natives employed by the State, moreover, the slender protection afforded to those in the service of trading corporations was, of course, lacking, seeing that, if they considered themselves ill-used, their only appeal was to State functionaries against whom, or against whose colleagues, they had complaints to make.

The Force Publique.

The *force publique* was but a small and, relatively, a well-managed body at the start. "Its tactical unit," according to M. Cattier's outline, "is the company, which at ordinary times comprises from 100 to 150 soldiers, besides from 40 to 60 military labourers. The companies, when employed on active service, should contain from 200 to 250 soldiers and from 40 to 60 military labourers. Each company has for its European staff a captain or lieutenant commandant, a lieutenant or sub-lieutenant, a sergeant-major, and a sergeant. The native staff comprises two sergeants, and from four to six corporals. Companies of fighting strength have in addition a second officer and a second sub-officer,

* 'With Stanley's Rear Column' (1890), p. 58.

† 'Bulletin Officiel' (1888), pp. 251, 294-300, 302.

both white, and another sergeant and three corporals who are coloured. The staff department of this force comprises several officers. It is directed by the commandant, who, under the authority of the Governor-General, administers the *personnel* and the *matériel* of the army, and the Governor-General, in his capacity of Commander-in-chief, distributes the different units."*

From the first, however, the *force publique* had a vicious branch or adjunct. "The organic decree," adds M. Cattier, "sanctions the creation of, besides the regular companies, permanent bodies of native militia, subject to military discipline. This native militia is distributed in companies and detachments, and its branches are, in each district, placed under the superior command of the officers of the regular *force publique*. The decree adds that the organisation of this militia will be determined by the Governor-General. But no decision on the subject has ever been published."†

The silence is intelligible. The Congo State's native militia has all along been nothing more than an unorganised and disorderly rabble of such savage allies as might be collected and employed in doing even ghastlier work than the *force publique* could be put to—allies who can scarcely be called mercenaries as their recompense has generally, if not always, been restricted to licence in looting and, when, as usually, they have been cannibals, in devouring the foes against whom they have been led, or sent without leading.

The way in which these warriors are recruited is thus described by a German who was for many years in the service of the Congo State, and for part of the time a captain commandant in its *force publique*: "Some district commissary receives instructions to furnish a certain number of men in a given time. He puts himself in communication with the chiefs, and invites them to a palaver at his

* 'Droit et Administration de l'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 264.
† *Ibid.*, p. 270.

residence. These chiefs, as a rule, already have an inkling of what is coming, and, if made wise by experience, make a virtue of necessity and present themselves. In that case the negotiations run their course easily enough ; each chief promises to supply a certain number of slaves, and receives presents in return. It may happen, however, that one or another pays no heed to the friendly invitation, in which case war is declared, his villages are burned down, perhaps some of his people are shot, and his stores or gardens are plundered. In this way the wild king is soon tamed, and he sues for peace, which, of course, is granted on condition of his supplying double the number of slaves. These men are entered in the State books as *libérés*. To prevent their running away they are put in irons and sent, on the first opportunity, to one of the military camps, where their irons are taken off and they are drafted into the army. The District Commissary is paid £2 sterling for every serviceable recruit."

* August Boshart, 'Zehn Jahre Afrikanischen Lebens' (1898), p. 155.

CHAPTER V.

Early Explorations and Enterprises [1885-1890].

Great energy, and some of it legitimate and praiseworthy, was shown from the first both by officers of the Congo State and by many others in exploring its least known regions and making acquaintance with its inhabitants.

Missionary and other Explorers.

Conspicuous among the pacific travellers who engaged in this work, as auxiliary to their religious occupations, were two Baptist missionaries, the Rev. W. Holman Bentley, who, after some experience nearer the mouth of the river, had settled on the shore of Stanley Pool in 1881, and the Rev. George Grenfell, who in 1884 made Leopoldville not only his principal abode, but also the starting-point for frequent voyages in his river steamer the *Peace* up and down the Congo and its affluents. Much valuable information was supplied by Mr. Grenfell about the Mongala, the Rubi, and the Lomani, as well as about the Ubangi, which he practically discovered and ascended as far as Zongo in 1885, the Ruki, which he visited with Captain von François in the same year, and the Kwango, which in 1886 he tracked with Dr. Mense.

Wissmann in the Kasai District.

A more famous traveller was Lieutenant von Wissmann, who followed up his exploration of the Kasai Basin in 1881 and 1882 by another journey in 1884 and 1885, when he founded the Luluaburg station, and who, with his colleague Dr. Ludwig Wolf, ascertained that the Sankuru, like the Lulua, was tributary to the Kasai. His third expedition, started upon in March, 1886, was more ambitious. He was invited by King Leopold "to open the Baluba country to any further undertakings in the

south of the Congo State; to make the native tribes to the south, the north-west, and eventually the eastern boundaries of the State acquainted and satisfied with their new political situation; to investigate and, if possible, counteract the proceedings of the slave-hunters; and to report about the countries in the south-east with respect to their cultivation."* Though he did not accomplish all that, his experiences were memorable.

The Kasai and its tributaries, it may be noted, water the whole of southern Congoland until the sources of the Zambezi are approached in the south and the upper reaches of the Congo in the east. The Balolo being the most numerous occupants of the great Congo-bend, north of the Kasai, the Baluba are the predominant race in the south, the principal branches of the latter being the Basonge, on the eastern side of the Sankuru, and the Bashilange on its western side. Akin to them are, on the north-west, the Bakuba, and on the south-west, with less affinity, the Balunda, an extensive and formidable race broken up into many groups, with some of which the Angola Portuguese have long been associated. Between them and Lake Tanganyika are the Batetela, the Manyema, and other cannibal communities, more recently and more disastrously associated with the so-called Arabs of East Africa, who had been ravaging the southernmost or Katanga portion of Congoland, and were already encroaching on the Portuguese "sphere of influence" among the Balunda and Baluba, before they wandered northward, to Stanley Falls and beyond them.

The Conquest of the Baluba Country.

While Lieutenant von Wissmann was absent in Europe Dr. Wolf, remaining in the Baluba and Bakuba country, had founded a station at Luebo, near the junction of the Lulua and the Kasai, and one of Wissmann's first undertakings on his return was, leaving his English sub-

* H. von Wissmann, 'My Second Journey through Equatorial Africa' (1891), p. 3.

ordinate Mr. Latrobe Bateman in charge of Luebo, to place matters both there and at Luluaburg on such a footing that control of the latter and more important station might safely be entrusted to two Belgians, Captain De Macar and Lieutenant Paul le Marinel, who had been sent out with that object. The situation was complicated—or, from the aggressors' point of view, perhaps, it was simplified—and the process of aggression was facilitated, by the fact that some fifteen years before, about 1870, a curious feud had arisen among the Bashilange in this neighbourhood, most of whom favoured, while others opposed, the encouragement of foreign trade. As bhang or hemp was the most attractive of the imports quarrelled about, a league or society, known as "Bena-Riamba," or "the sons of hemp," which had been started, became the centre of a remarkable political and social movement, and even gave to their district a new name—Lubuku, "the land of friendship," or "Philadelphia."* Kalamba, the most influential king or chief in those parts, was at the head of this party, and, driving the non-smokers across the Lulua, had for his principal colleague or rival a much younger chief, Chingenge, when Lieutenant von Wissmann undertook to make both of them vassals of the Congo State. Wissmann's earlier tactics had been, he admitted, "to keep the natives separated into two parties, so as, in case of need, to lead one against the other," and to this end he had endeavoured to widen the differences between Kalamba and Chingenge. But, as he added, "experience had taught me that these tactics, which always made the management of the natives difficult, were necessary no longer." He accordingly "resolved upon a single control of the natives," and his account of the course taken by him is instructive. "There could naturally be no doubt," we read, "as to who was to be the chief dependent on me or my successor. Kalamba was the mightiest, the most respected, and, above all, the most devoted of all the princes of Lubuku. His sister, Sangula

* A. H. Keane, 'Africa' (1895), Vol. II. p. 118.

Meta, the high-priestess of the Riambi worship, who had great influence over her brother, was even more devoted to me and to us all than he was. Both brother and sister had given so many proofs of their trustworthiness and affection that I could not but banish all scruples about Kalamba's faithfulness. Added to this, Kalamba's eldest son and successor, Kalamba Moana, who was much more intelligent than his father, seemed to be equally trustworthy. As I considered Luluaburg and its surrounding Bashilange as the centre whence the Congo State should undertake the further exploration and civilisation of its southern countries, and as the easiest and cheapest way to this object was to have one agent only to superintend and direct from one station, I now began, in the immediate circuit of the station, in the friendly country—that is, Lubuku—to make the greater chiefs, the eldest members of a family called Baqua or Bena, responsible masters of the districts allotted to them, so that the numerous would-be independent seniors of the villages might easily be managed. So I made the chiefs of the Baqua Chirimba, Baqua Kambulu, Bena Kusu, Bena Chitari, &c., to each of whom belonged from five to fifteen villages, real masters of their districts. I intended to extend my authority over fifty such families. Each of the chiefs was to have a star-flag, and all these flags were to be placed under Kalamba's large union flag. The latter, to whom a certain not too large tribute was to be paid by the chiefs only, was to engage himself always to supply warriors for any chance campaign, conductors for a journey, labourers for keeping the roads clear, &c. He was to provide sufficient means for passing to and fro on the river crossings, to induce the population to grow rice, and to carry out different other projects."*

In pursuance of this arrangement Wissmann sent word to the "family chiefs" whom he had selected that on a given day they were to present themselves before him, bringing gifts or tribute "according to the wealth of their

* 'My Second Journey through Equatorial Africa,' pp. 86-8.

tribe"; and it was promised that they should, in return, "receive flags and a proper chieftain's suit." Three, who refused to come, "were written on the blackboard, in order to be forced into submission as soon as time permitted." Of the others, after the "scruples" raised by them had been removed, "each one returned proudly with an unfurled star-flag, the new ensign of the Congo State dressed in flowing garments, quite ready to be a staff in the alliance of lictors that Kalamba was now to command as a life-guardsman of the new State." The recalcitrants were soon frightened into submission, and some of their people were captured and sent as "criminals in fetters" to work at Luebo "for the sake of example." Wissmann was himself surprised at the ease with which "the subjugation of a people numbering many thousands" was accomplished with the small force of from twenty to thirty armed carriers brought by him from the coast, and about sixty auxiliaries hired from a "warlike tribe" in the neighbourhood; but he attributed it to "the unusual intelligence of the Bashilange." Much further pressure had to be resorted to by him in September, when he returned from a ten weeks' expedition to the Sankuru, and formally installed Kalamba as "head chief of Lubuku," subject to his compliance with an arrangement that placed nearly a million and a half of Bashilange under the more or less effective rule of the Belgian officers stationed at Luluaburg. The terms agreed upon were thus summed up: "All the old hostilities were to be forgotten. The chiefs alone were to retain power over their inferiors. The tribute was to be paid regularly, once a year, and it was not to be excessive. The chiefs were to be at liberty to complain of Kalamba to the head of the station. No wars were to be carried on without the consent of the head of Luluaburg. Convicts under sentence of death were to be surrendered to the station. For journeys, wars, or particularly important work Kalamba had to furnish men. For those used for work or for an escort a regular tax had

to be paid, and those for warlike purposes he had to furnish gratis. The market price was to be the same throughout Lubuku."*

Wissmann's Expedition to Nyangwe.

With a caravan about 900 strong and with 500 guns, most of which were muzzle-loading, Lieutenants von Wissmann and le Marinel left Luluaburg on 16th November, and three months later they arrived at Nyangwe. They had lost by the way a good many of their followers, who comprised about 250 Bashilange carriers, as well as some 600 auxiliaries, supplied in accordance with the arrangement with Kalamba; but this force was formidable enough to prevent necessity for much fighting, and the explorers were able to send home many details about the ever-extending encroachments and maraudings of Tipu-Tipu and his partners. From Nyangwe Le Marinel returned with most of the native followers to Luluaburg, which he reached on 18th April, 1887, to use his experience in many years' later work under the Congo State. Wissmann proceeded, with many halts, to Quelimane, which he reached on 8th August, and after that he lost no time in taking employment under his own Government and turning to account in German East Africa the knowledge he had acquired as one of the Congo State's agents. To the Congo State, however, he had rendered lasting, albeit cruel and ruinous service by the precedent he established for successful employment of savage organizations in introducing to the natives perversions of "civilisation" more injurious than barbarism.

On his arrival at Nyangwe in February, 1887, Wissmann met and renewed acquaintance with Tipu-Tipu's son, Sefu, of whom he had thought well some years before, but whom he now "discovered to be a passionate, suspicious and cunning fellow." "Sefu's behaviour was most shocking," he reported. "The hot-headed young fellow, made insolent by his sense of superiority, treated me in

* 'My Second Journey throu h Equatorial Africa,' pp. 88-91, 131-134.

such a manner that it was only with the utmost effort I could master myself sufficiently to answer him as quietly as necessity demanded. We were regularly put through a series of questions as to whence we came, in whose commission, how long we had been coming, &c. At our answers, which may have seemed strange to the half-savage Arabs, who are partly Negroes (Sefu, too, is quite black), they would sometimes laugh right into our faces. They criticised Le Marinel's and my looks without hesitation in the Swahili language." The explanation of this treatment was that news had lately arrived of a disturbance at Stanley Falls, where nearly six months before the Arabs had attacked and overcome the occupants of the station set up there by Mr. Stanley, and that there had been general expectation of "an avenging expedition," to meet which, it was stated, "thousands of Tipu-Tipu's people had been sent thither, among them many warriors from Nyangwe, who had only lately returned, as the whites, being too few in numbers to fight against Tipu, had not come back."* Hence the contempt with which the representatives of the Congo State, coming as suppliants for food and shelter, not as assailants, were received.

The visitors, though threatened with captivity and slavery, and actually debarred from journeying northwards as they intended, suffered only in their dignity. But the treatment accorded to them was conclusive evidence of the gravity of the situation, which had been partly brought about by Mr. Stanley's encouragement of Arab advances in the territory claimed by the Congo State, and of which the Stanley Falls catastrophe was an important incident.

The Stanley Falls Disaster.

Mr. Stanley, in December, 1883, had started the Stanley Falls station on a small island amid the rapids of the Upper Congo, accessible from the right bank of the river, and had placed it under the custody of "a little Scotchman named Binnie," the engineer of one of his river

* 'My Second Journey through Equatorial Africa,' pp. 220, 224.

steamers, who had volunteered for the post. There, as Mr. Stanley said, Binnie was left "all alone in the very heart of Africa, removed a twenty days' journey from the nearest station, and doomed to at least six months' isolation from the sympathetic world, with only the thought of a large work before him, while his only companionship had to be found among some 1,500 barbarians four hundred yards off on the same island and more than 10,000 within easy reach of him." After a few months, we are told, "the little man was discovered to have done nobly; he had enlarged his possessions; he had extended his clearing and built an entire village; he had been planting and making gardens, and the savage natives round about him acknowledged him as their friend; Binnie was the umpire in all arguments, the arbiter in all political controversies—in short, he was the general referee in all the disputes which occurred in the locality."* Before long, however, Mr. Binnie was replaced by Lieutenant Wester, who, in October 1884, made a treaty with the Arabs, a son of Tipu-Tipu's being one of its signatories, by which they undertook to abstain from raiding for slaves or ivory to the west of the Falls and to remain at peace with the whites in the district. The natives at the same time placed themselves under the protection of the Congo Association, but without avail. When Captain van Gèle, one of the ablest and most persistent of the Congo State pioneers and administrators, arrived at the Falls in January, 1885, after exploring the Ubangi, he found that Tipu had been desolating the neighbourhood for six months and had, in the name of the Sultan of Zanzibar, repudiated the treaty with Lieutenant Wester to which his son had been a party. It was to protect, if possible, the actual station at Stanley Falls, and to make some effort at befriending the natives on this small island, if no others, that early in the year Mr. Walter Deane was sent up by Sir Francis de Winton. His honest action was the immediate cause of the troubles that Lieutenant von Wissmann

* 'The Congo,' Vol. II., pp. 165, 275.

heard of at Nyangwe, in February, 1887, and that had considerable influence on the famous Emin Pasha Relief Expedition on which Mr. Stanley started almost at the same time.

Mr. Deane took with him to Stanley Falls thirty-two Hausa soldiers and about forty Bangala auxiliaries. A plentiful supply of ammunition and rifles, with a large reinforcement of men, was promised as soon as the next river steamer could be dispatched; but this cargo never reached him. "The spirit of his orders," according to his friend, Lieutenant J. R. Werner, "was that he was to afford protection to the natives, to do all in his power to prevent raids and put down the slave trade, and to keep on good terms with the Arabs."* These incompatible and impracticable conditions appear to have been as far as possible complied with; but about the middle of July an event occurred which forced on a crisis. Tipu-Tipu having gone back to Zanzibar and left his brother-in-law and partner, Bwana Nzige, and that partner's son, Rashid, to complete the business connected with their raid, a woman entered Mr. Deane's camp one day, seeking his protection on the ground that she was the daughter of a chief near Kasongo, Tipu's headquarters, and that Tipu had given her to one of his headmen, who cruelly flogged her. She was taken back to the Arab camp, but on her returning, half-murdered by her Arab master, Mr. Deane gave her asylum and, when Bwana Nzige and Rashid came to claim her, offered to pay for her ransom, but refused to restore her. He was threatened during the next few days, but not attacked until after the expected river steamer had arrived, bringing one Belgian officer, Lieutenant Dubois, but none of the promised and sorely needed fighting material. Thereupon the news of his disappointment gave courage to his enemies.

* Werner, 'A Visit to Stanley's Rear Guard' (1890), p. 94. The story of "the loss of Stanley Falls" is fully told both in this volume (pp. 87-127) and in Mr. Herbert Ward's 'Five Years with the Congo Cannibals' (1890), pp. 196-216.

A large party of Manyema, having crossed from the mainland in the night, stormed the station in the morning. They were kept at bay for three days, but on the fourth, the ammunition being nearly exhausted and seven Hausas having been killed, the Bangala auxiliaries deserted in canoes promising to inform the authorities on their way, down the river as to the state of affairs. On the fifth day 26th August, they were followed by all but five of the remaining Hausas, and in the evening Deane and Dubois decided that their only chance of saving their own lives and those of their five faithful companions, one being an Aruwimi native, lay in setting fire to the station and taking shelter in the woods till relief, if sent to them, could arrive. This was done by all but Dubois, who slipped from a rock and was drowned in attempting to cross over to the mainland. The others wandered about and concealed themselves for thirty days, until Captain Coquilhat came to their rescue. In November Mr. Herbert Ward met Deane near Leopoldville, after he had regained strength enough to travel homeward. "If the Governor will give me two hundred men," Deane said, "I 'll go up again now, weak as I am, and rescue the station and drive the Arabs back to Nyangwe." That did not happen. Deane, broken in health, died in the following year, and Stanley Falls remained in the Arabs' hands until June, 1888.

The Emin Pasha Relief Expedition.

When the news of this catastrophe reached Europe in the summer of 1886 preparations were being made for supplying Emin Pasha with the help he sorely needed for the preservation of his Equatorial Province, which touched the north-eastern corner of Congoland, and which, in the opinion of most experts, was much easier of access from the eastern than from the western side of Africa. Arrangements were in progress for "a peaceful relief expedition," at a cost of about £21,500, of which £10,000 was to be provided by the Egyptian Government, to be sent to Wadelai by way either of Masailand or of Uganda,

and the late Mr. Joseph Thompson was talked of as its chief. But in November Mr. Stanley offered himself, and was selected, for the post. "There is only one route which is safely open for the money, and that is the Congo," he wrote. "By this route Emin can be reached safely by the middle of June, 1887." Very unwillingly the Emin Relief Committee agreed to the proposed change on its being informed, early in January, that King Leopold, whose salaried officer Mr. Stanley still was, objected to his taking any other route, but was ready, if the Congo was chosen, "to gratuitously place at the disposal of the expedition the whole of the State's naval stock, as far as the working of its own administration would allow." "The Congo State has nothing to gain by the expedition for the relief of Emin Pasha passing through its territory," King Leopold's agent wrote on 7th January*; but there can be no doubt that the passage of the expedition through the State's territory was insisted upon, and its intention cruelly perverted, on account of the advantages it was expected to bring to the State in the difficulties then pressing upon it and notably revealed by the Stanley Falls disaster.

Mr. Stanley and Tipu-Tipu.

On 14th January, 1887, a week before starting for Zanzibar, where he had to procure carriers, Mr. Stanley paid a visit to his employer. "While at Brussels," he wrote, "I was consulted by the King of the Belgians respecting Tipu-Tipu and his designs on the Congo State. I advised that he should be employed as an agent of the Congo State, it being a far cheaper and far more humane method to disarm his hostility than the costly method of force, and I was entrusted with the mission to negotiate with him," with a view to his being "enlisted as the salaried governor of the Stanley Falls region, whose duty it would be to arrest the advance of the Arabs down the Congo, and to save its rich and populous banks from the devastation which had already commenced below the Falls." In

* 'In Darkest Africa' (1890), Vol. I., pp. 32, 43, 45.

accordance with this preposterous proposal Mr. Stanley made an agreement with Tipu, whom he met at Zanzibar on 23rd February, by which the great slave-raider and empire-maker was appointed "Wali of the Independent State of the Congo at Stanley Falls district, at a salary of £30 a month." The principal conditions were that "Tipu-Tipu is to hoist the flag of the Congo State at its station near Stanley Falls, to maintain the authority of the State on the Congo and all its affluents from the said station downwards to the Aruwimi river, and to prevent the tribes thereon, as well Arab as others, from engaging in the slave-trade," and that "Tipu-Tipu is to be at full liberty to carry on his legitimate private trade in any direction, and to send his caravans to and from any places he may desire."*

Tipu-Tipu was at this time paying one of his periodical visits to Zanzibar, there to dispose of the slaves and ivory he had procured in the interior, and among the marketable goods and chattels were three Krupp shells which six months before Mr. Deane had used in his efforts to hold Stanley Falls station. The shells, according to Mr. Stanley, Tipu kept to exhibit to his friends as "the kind of missiles which the Belgians pelted his settlements with." "He was exceedingly wroth," Mr. Stanley reported, "and nourished a deep scheme of retaliation. It took me some time to quiet his spasms of resentment. When he had poured out his indignation some time I told him in a bland way that I knew well how great and powerful a man he was, &c., and that it was scarcely fair to blame all the Europeans and King Leopold because an officer at Stanley Falls had been pleased to heave Krupp shells at his settlements, that this trouble had been caused by the excess of zeal of one man in defending a slave-woman who had sought his protection, in the same way that Rashid, his nephew, had been carried away by the fury of youth to defend his rights."† Thus conciliated, Tipu-Tipu not only accepted an

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' C 5,906, p. 4, and C. 5,601, p. 23.

† 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 64.

appointment very helpful to him in his schemes of conquest, but also promised to supply from Stanley Falls 600 carriers, in addition to the 605 Zanzibaris whom Mr. Stanley and his white assistants escorted, with seventy-five Sudanese and Somali soldiers, and with Tipu himself and nearly a hundred of his wives and other attendants, as passengers from Zanzibar to the Congo.

The carriers were not needed solely to take relief to Emin Pasha. It was known that Emin had accumulated large stores of ivory, to which the Egyptian Government, as Emin's employer, had the first claim, but of which it had been arranged that a fair proportion, if it was secured, should go towards the expenses of the expedition. "Why not attempt the carriage of the ivory to the Congo?" asked Mr. Stanley, who estimated its value at £60,000. "Accordingly I engaged Tipu and his people to assist me in conveying the ammunition to Emin, and on return to carry this ivory. After a good deal of bargaining I entered into a contract with him, by which he agreed to supply 600 carriers at £6 per loaded head. Thus, if each carrier carries seventy pounds weight of ivory, one round trip will bring to the fund £13,200 net at Stanley Falls."*

The story of the eventful and lamentable Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, as it was called, concerns us only so far as it had to do with Congo affairs, though the whole business was in grim and ghastly violation of the humane principles by which it professed to be guided and which it made a pretence of serving.

Mr. Stanley's Relieving Force.

The Sudanese soldiers—for some time placed under the control of Major E. M. Barttelot, who, with Captain R. H. Nelson, Lieutenant W. G. Stairs, Mr. J. S. Jameson, Mr. Mountenay Jephson, Dr. T. H. Parke, Mr. Rose Troup,

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. II., p. 69. It was openly stated without contradiction that the £6 per head was to be paid wholly or in part in the form of gunpowder.

Mr. Herbert Ward, and Mr. William Bonny, accompanied Mr. Stanley from England or met him on the way—were, according to Major Barttelot's report, "a most lawless and undisciplined lot," so bad that Major Chermside, who recruited them in Egypt, "must have picked out the biggest scoundrels he could find."* Some of the Zanzibaris had served under Mr. Stanley in one or more of his previous expeditions, but, as he admitted, "only about 150 were free men, all the remainder being either slaves or convicts"; and they very soon proved themselves to be a most unmanageable gang of slaves. Two hours after the vessel's departure from Zanzibar, "what is called a shindy took place between the Zanzibaris and the Sudanese," and "it required a mixture of persuasiveness and sharp knocks to reduce the fractious factions to order"; Mr. Jephson and Captain Nelson in particular, as well as Mr. Stanley, handling their shillelaghs "most gallantly." "The result of the scrimmage was ten broken arms, fifteen serious gashes with spears on face and head, and contusions on shoulders and backs not worth remark."† "The work we are doing," Mr. Jameson wrote five weeks afterwards in his diary, when the motley company had reached Banana and was plodding along the northern bank of the Congo, "is not fit for any white man, and ought to be given to slave-drivers. It is all very nice for Mr. Stanley, who rides ahead straight on to the next camp, where we arrive hours afterwards, having done nothing all day but kick lazy carriers and put the loads on the heads of those who fling them down." And five days later, "The work was truly sickening. At every twenty yards one had to stop to put a load on a man's head who had flung it down, and very likely give him a dose of stick before he would go on."‡ "I felt like a brute, flogging the men to get them on," Major Barttelot

* Major Barttelot's 'Diaries and Letters' (1890), pp. 55, 56.

† 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., pp. 72, 93.

‡ 'Story of the Rear Column,' edited by Mrs. J. S. Jameson (1890), pp. 14, 17.

wrote on the same day; and four months afterwards he said in a letter to his sister, "I did not hit anybody on the march for a long time, but I found that Stanley did, right and left, and that it really was the only plan to get these Zanzibaris on. Stanley expected us to hit the men, though he always took their part when they complained. We have been nothing but slave-drivers since we started, and the trouble I have had to get the Sudanese along was something dreadful."*

Mr. Stanley's March to Leopoldville.

On arriving at the mouth of the Congo Mr. Stanley had found that the transport assistance promised by the Congo State authorities was not forthcoming, and he had to get on as best he could with such help as he was able to obtain from traders and missionaries. The tramp of 235 miles from Matadi to Leopoldville lasted from 21st March to 22nd April, and after he had been a fortnight on the road Mr. Stanley deemed it expedient, instead of marching in advance with his bodyguard and leaving his subordinates to do all the kicking and flogging, to take into his own hands the management of his slave caravan. "On reaching Mwamba, the 6th April," he wrote, "I was particularly struck with the increase of demoralisation in the caravan. So far, in order not to press the people, I had been very quiet, entrusting the labour of bringing up the stragglers to the younger men, that they might become experienced in the troubles which beset expeditions in Africa. But the necessity of enforcing discipline was particularly demonstrated on this march. The Zanzibaris had no sooner pitched the tents of their respective officers than they rushed like madmen among the neighbouring villages and commenced to loot native property, in doing which one was shot dead by a plucky native. This fatal incident is one of those signal proofs that discipline is better than constant forbearance."† How he "enforced discipline" we learn from the next day's

* 'Diaries and Letters,' pp. 79, 121. † 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 84.

records of two of the young men whom he was making accustomed to "the troubles which beset expeditions in Africa." "Stanley, as rear-guard, got on A1," wrote Major Barttelot, "he flogged loafers, and they all kicked amazingly." * "Marched to Vombo," Mr. Jameson noted; "quite the quickest march we have done, owing to a good hard road, and Mr. Stanley doing rear-guard with some of his Somalis himself. How he did lay his stick about the lazy ones! And the Somalis whacked away too. It was a sight for sore eyes to see the lame, the sick, the halt and the blind running with their loads as if they were feathers; and I was delighted to see some of my men catch it hot, after I had been told by Mr. Stanley himself not to strike them." † "There is nothing more agreeable," was Mr. Stanley's own comment on this day's quick marching, "than the feeling one possesses after a good journey briskly accomplished. An unreflecting spectator, hovering near our line of march, might think we were unnecessarily cruel; but the application of a few cuts to the confirmed stragglers secures eighteen hours' rest to about 800 people and their officers, saves the goods from being robbed—for frequently these dawdlers lay purposely behind for such intentions—and the day ends happily for all, and the morrow's journey has no horrors for us." ‡

Some "unreflecting spectators" from a distance may find it difficult to regard with Mr. Stanley's complacency the picture drawn by himself of his march to Stanley Pool, with stick in hand, driving forward his straggling crowd of carriers and soldiers, securing by the ordinary slave-driver's devices a "happy ending" for each day, and seeing "no horror" in the repetition of these devices during each "morrow's journey."

When he arrived at Leopoldville Mr. Stanley ascertained that, besides sixty-three of his party who had deserted or, too ill to carry their loads even under the

* 'Diaries and Letters,' p. 80. † 'Story of the Rear Column,' p. 18.
‡ 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 84.

influence of the stick, had been left to die on the way, "about a hundred men were useless as soldiers or carriers," and that "the Zanzibaris were observed to be weakening rapidly," through having been "compelled to live on stinted rations lately, and their habit of indulging in raw manioc." As the rice doled out to them was insufficient, and the country traversed—from which most of the natives fled at their approach—was too barren and desolate for much other food to be obtainable either by purchase or by theft, the poor wretches scarcely deserved blame for "plucking up the poisonous manioc tubers and making themselves wretchedly sick."*

Misrule at Leopoldville.

At Leopoldville Mr. Stanley expected to find the Congo State steamers in readiness to transport the whole expedition along the Upper Congo to the outlet of the Aruwimi, a distance of nearly 1,000 miles. In this he was disappointed, as only one State steamer, the *Stanley*, was available; and his excuse for seizing the two missionary vessels which he did find was, as he pleaded, that "our necessities were so urgent, and immediate departure from the famine-stricken region was imperative if we were to be freed from the scandal of seeing these armed men, maddened by hunger, helping themselves."† The cause of the scarcity of food is explained by Mr. Troup, who had old acquaintance with the neighbourhood, and who arrived a few days after Mr. Stanley with a large quantity of food brought up by native carriers. "When I was at Leopoldville in 1884," he said, "we could get as much chiquanga as we wanted. We had a regular fixed price for it. The native women of the neighbouring villages used to make this staple article of food from the manioc plant or cassava root, and often we have been obliged to refuse the too plentiful supply offered. This plenty was due largely to the protection that had been extended to the natives hereabouts; but

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 84.

† Parliamentary Papers, C. 5,906, p. 5.

during the time of the transport of the sections of a steamer, which necessitated the encampments of large bodies of Zanzibaris at different points on the caravan route, these had, owing to a lack of strict surveillance on the part of the officers in charge, obtained their food by ill-treating the natives. Consequently now the villages on this route were all deserted, the inhabitants having gone further back in the bush."*

Mr. Stanley's Voyage to Yambuya.

Leaving Mr. Troup to await the return of the *Stanley*, and then to bring on in it the bulk of the stores he had in his charge, and also the men for whom there was not room on the first journey, Mr. Stanley started on 1st May with about 500 of his own people and with Tipu-Tipu's party. The voyage was in many ways troublesome, especially as sufficient food could not be procured by either stealing or buying it from the natives in the villages on the river side, and Mr. Stanley had to drop some of his men at the places that he thought likeliest to afford them sustenance while he hurried on with a picked body to prepare the way for the others when they could accompany Mr. Troup's cargo of stores and the 600 carriers promised by Tipu-Tipu. "We had started from England with the cry of urgency in our ears and memories," he wrote, "and it behoved us to speed on as well as circumstances would permit in obedience to necessity, trusting that the rear column would be able to follow on our tracks some six or seven weeks later." At Bolobo, on 15th May, he left under the care of Messrs. Ward and Bonny 125 men, "who appeared weakest in body, to fatten up on the bananas and excellent native bread and fish that were easily procurable." At Bangala, on 30th May, he told off Major Barttelot and a detachment of forty Sudanese to escort Tipu-Tipu to Stanley Falls without delay. Travelling himself less rapidly, and quitting the Congo at the junction with it of the Aruwimi, he steamed up that tributary till

* J. Rose Troup, 'With Stanley's Rear Column' (1890), p. 85.

he reached Yambuya on 15th June. There, a week later, he was rejoined by Major Barttelot, whom, on 28th June, he left with Mr. Jameson, in charge of 127 Zanzibaris and Sudanese, with orders to await not only the arrival of the contingents resting at Leopoldville and Bolobo, 131 men in all, but also his own return, which he expected would be some four or five months later.*

Tipu-Tipu and his Followers.

On his way to Stanley Falls Major Barttelot had had a foretaste of the troubles that weighed him down during the next twelve months. Halting at the village of Mbunga on 10th June, in order that Tipu-Tipu might trade with the inhabitants after "peace brotherhood" had been made with their chief, Major Barttelot reported, "All went well for an hour and they were buying away. I was on shore, walking by myself, unarmed, towards the southern end of the village—I had already been to the other end—when suddenly I heard loud vociferations in front of me, and voices raised as in anger. I hurried on to see, but before I got there about twenty of Tipu's men rushed past me, and two were wounded. I then met three of the Sudanese, who forced me to come back. All this while the natives were passing us by dozens, all shouting and flourishing their spears and knives. They never offered to touch me, though unarmed; in fact, they ran into the long crags on either side of the road to avoid me. About 200 yards from the ship I found one of Tipu's men lying in the road, stabbed in the back by a spear. We carried him on board, when I found Tipu had six men and one woman wounded, and a Zanzibari of the ship's crew. I fell my men in and went to the northern end of the village to look for the natives, Tipu going to the southern; but they had all disappeared into the bush. So we burnt the southern and central part of the village." "About four p.m.," the narrative continues, "we passed another village, where they were assembling, and Tipu-Tipu wished me to put in, but

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., pp. 103-31.

I would not. He ordered my men to fire, but, as Stanley had told me on no account to have unnecessary rows with the villagers, I ordered them not to fire. This caused an estrangement between Tipu-Tipu and myself, who said, as I had refused to aid him, he would do nothing more for the expedition. I explained to him how matters were, and that we had already punished one village, that I could not disobey Mr. Stanley's orders, and that my men could only take orders from me. He agreed to this, but was still angry with Stanley, and said he should refer it to him."*

Meanwhile, on his way up the Congo and the Aruwimi to Yambuya, Mr. Stanley had been doing some trading and grumbling with the natives on his own account. A few of the villagers were hospitable. Others resented his approach—and not without reason, as the *Stanley* was well known to them as a bearer of white men and Zanzibaris, nearly as ready as were Tipu-Tipu and the Arabs to attack them and burn their homesteads. "They are anything but friendly," Mr. Jameson wrote on 11th June; "at nearly every village they yelled and shouted at us, shaking their spears and shields, and making signs of cutting our throats, heaping all sorts of insults upon us. It is a bad look-out for our chances of trading for food at the entrenched camp." On 14th June, however, some natives timidly consented to have dealings with the intruders. "Just before we started," Mr. Jameson noted, "some of Mr. Stanley's company set fire to the huts—a most uncalled-for piece of devilment, and a thing to be regretted, as it is more likely to set the natives against us than anything."†

The Capture of Yambuya.

Such were the conditions under which Mr. Stanley captured Yambuya, on the south side of the Aruwimi, with the intention of establishing there a camp for his rear column. He had visited this place in 1883, and had then, as he reported, "attempted to conciliate the natives, with-

* 'Diaries and Letters,' p. 104.

† 'Story of the Rear Column,' pp. 64-7.

out any permanent result." He now resolved to occupy it, "if not with the natives' goodwill, by fair purchase of the privilege, then by force."* The natives, he admitted, protested against his landing. "Camp on the opposite side if you will," they said, according to his account; "we will bring you whatever we have to sell; but, if we permit you to land here, our village will become the common resort of the Arab slavers." To this reasonable plea he paid no attention. "We argued that if we were with them they need have no fear of marauders; but we wasted our breath. We had been nearly two hours at this work of negotiating, and the natives, being addicted to palavers, would not have minded very much had the palavers lasted a week. We therefore signalled to the *Stanley* to appear with the troops. At a second signal both steamers set up a hideous steam-whistling, under the protection of which the troops disembarked, and in a few seconds we were in possession of an empty village. There was no occasion to fire a shot, for the natives had disappeared as completely as the vapour of the steam-whistling had dissolved."† When the invaders landed on the morning of 16th June, according to Mr. Jameson, "not a native was to be seen, and the whole village was occupied in perfect peace." "We put up our tents," he added, "and destroyed the huts which were not required for our men."‡

The natives having established themselves on the other side of the river, Mr. Stanley endeavoured to open up trade with them, and with others in the neighbourhood, on what he considered to be generous terms. "Several captures were made in the woods," he stated, "and, after being shown everything, the natives were supplied with handfuls of beads, to convey the assurance that no fear ought to be entertained of us and no harm would be done to them."§ Major

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 109.

† A letter to Sir William Mackinnon quoted by Mr. Troup in 'With Stanley's Rear Column,' p. 136.

‡ 'Story of the Rear Column,' p. 65.

§ 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 112.

Barttelot having arrived from Stanley Falls on 22nd June, and it having been finally decided that he should remain at Yambuya until he could follow with the rear column and Tipu-Tipu's 600 carriers, "blood-brotherhood" was made between him and the native chief on the 26th. "Let us hope that it will induce them to bring us something to eat," was Mr. Jameson's comment. "Here are Major Barttelot and myself left absolutely without one atom of meat, tinned or fresh, for several months, and no visible means of obtaining any, for the natives have brought in nothing, and have removed everything from all the villages within reach of this camp."*

Mr. Stanley's Rear-Column at Yambuya.

The expected four or five months extended to fourteen before Mr. Stanley returned to find that both Major Barttelot and Mr. Jameson had died of their sufferings, and that the surviving residue of their party, increased from 125 to 271 by the arrival of Mr. Troup and Mr. Ward on 14th August, had dwindled down to, as he called them, "102 meagre, starved, and anæmic souls." Their and their comrades' sufferings had been maddening and had actually maddened some of them. Waiting in vain for the promised carriers, without whom the enormous packages in their care could not be removed, exposed to insult from the Arabs with whom they occasionally came in contact, they were from the first in desperate straits and driven to desperate methods of trying to keep themselves alive. Deeming it a necessity of self-preservation that in their search for food they should oppress their native neighbours, and excusing themselves on the same ground for the growing tyranny with which they treated their Zanzibari and Sudanese followers, the five Englishmen were at the mercy of Tipu-Tipu and of his Arab and Manyema slave-raiders, settled round Stanley Falls and prowling up to Yambuya itself. "It must be remembered," said Mr. Troup, "that, had the Arabs in anger taken matters into their own hands, they

* 'Story of the Rear Column,' pp. 75, 76.

could have quickly made an end of our portion of the expedition, either by starving us out or by an attack on our not too strongly fortified and none too well garrisoned camp."*

From Tipu himself, his nephew Rashid, and others, whom they visited at intervals, Major Barttelot and his companions received barbaric courtesies and repeated promises of the carriers that had been bargained for, and eventually about 400 of these men arrived after terms more favourable than Tipu-Tipu obtained from Mr. Stanley had been arranged for at heavy personal expense to Major Barttelot and Mr. Jameson. This arrival, however, was only a cause of further trouble. "The greater part of their men," Mr. Troup explained, speaking of Tipu's followers in general, "were Manyema, natives of this vicinity, cannibals, untrained in serving white men, and never accustomed to carry loads. They are half-slaves, only having been subjugated comparatively recently by Tipu-Tipu's people. When they are employed by the Arabs it is chiefly as fighting men, and it is beneath their dignity to carry loads, such work being relegated to their women and slaves. They are under the control of Tipu-Tipu's sheikhs, who send them out in marauding parties, under the leadership of an Arab, to obtain ivory or other valuables. They will attack other natives, loot their villages, kill or make prisoners of whom they please, doing all this in what manner they like. They will be absent on such excursions for weeks or months, but they are obliged after a time to return to the Arabs and give up part of their loot. They are not accustomed to the restraints imposed by white men, who require their followers to march just so many miles a day, to be in camp at a fixed hour, and to be subject to stringent rules."† The Manyema sent to Major Barttelot's camp in the earlier part of 1888, and the others carrying on their vicious occupations outside, only added to the demoralization of its inmates, and more trouble came when on

* 'With Stanley's Rear Column,' p. 176. † *Ibid.*, p. 9.

11th June the camp was broken up for the march eastward which was attempted on the arrival of the larger party, with one Muni Somai as the chief appointed for them by Tipu.

On that day a move was made, but five weeks were wasted in covering ninety miles of ground. Desertions, thefts, and acts of insubordination on the part of the 127 Zanzibaris were numberless, and the defiance of orders by the 420 Manyema under Muni Somai's independent control was constant. "Muni Somai told me to-day," Mr. Jameson wrote on 22nd June, "that the Manyema were not men but simply 'meat-like beasts'; for, said he, 'How can they be men, and yet love to eat men as they do? If there were two goats and one man offered them to choose from for food, they would take the man. All they think of now is what a lot of natives they will eat further on.' He added, 'The first lot of natives that they fight, they will eat as many as they can, and when their stomachs are full, they will then catch others to carry their loads.'"* By one of these savages Major Barttelot was shot to the heart and killed instantly on 19th July, when he and some of his rabble had reached Banalya. Mr. Jameson, who arrived three days later after trying to recover some deserters, made futile efforts to obtain capable carriers from Tipu-Tipu, but was stricken down by fever and, being taken by boat to Bangala, died there on 16th August. It was on the following day that Mr. Stanley arrived at Banalya and heard of the disasters that had befallen the comrades he had left at Yambuya nearly fourteen months before.

Mr. Stanley's Excursion to Lake Albert Nyanza.

His own experiences had been disastrous, though less to himself than to those he took with him, and much less even to his companions than to the natives, whom he harried and killed during more than five months of dreary plodding through the

* 'Story of the Rear Column,' p. 319.

forests between Yambuya and the neighbourhood of Lake Albert Nyanza, where he had invited Emin Pasha to await him. Having plunged into the forest with nearly 400 hungry followers, for whom food had to be procured in some way, Mr. Stanley felt himself constrained to despoil and persecute all the people he met with whenever they would not or could not supply what he wanted in exchange for the brass rods and beads he offered. He appears to have at all times preferred purchasing to stealing, provided he was free to buy on his own terms; but any resistance was promptly dealt with by the Remington and Winchester rifles of his marauding host, or by the Maxim gun which he had brought from England and never failed to use on the smallest provocation. That the natives should attempt to defend themselves, or in any way retaliate, seemed to him, if not a monstrous crime, at any rate the excess of folly.

His first day's conduct after leaving Yambuya is a sufficient example of the proceedings customary during the next five months, and, at intervals, the two years following thereon. When he had journeyed only four miles he saw a fleet of canoes on the Aruwimi, on the southern bank of which his pioneers were cutting a path. "There was much movement and stir," he reported, "owing, of course, to the alarm that the Yambuyas had communicated to their neighbours. The islands were being crowded with the women and children of the Yankonde, whom as yet we had not seen. About a hundred canoes formed in the stream crowded with native warriors, and followed the movements of the column, as it appeared and disappeared in the light and into the shadows, jeering, mocking, and teasing." The "alarm" was reasonable, as Mr. Stanley, a fortnight before, had ruthlessly expelled the Yambuya from their homes. But he considered it foolish and strange, and when he had advanced further and found that some 300 natives were not only preparing to defend their village with drawn bows in their hands, but had actually planted sharp

skewers on the road to it in order to hamper his approach, he felt that he had indeed good cause to be indignant at "the craft of these pure pagans," and to fiercely resent it. "Forming two lines of twelve men across the road," according to his narrative, "the first line was ordered to pick out the skewers, the second line was ordered to cover the workers with their weapons, and, at the first arrow shown, to fire. A dozen scouts were sent on either flank of the road to make their way into the village through the woods. We had scarcely advanced twenty yards along the cleared way before columns of smoke broke out of the town, and a little cloud of arrows came towards us, but falling short. A volley was returned, the skewers were fast being picked out, and our advance was made until we reached the village at the same time that the scouts rushed out of the underwood, and, as all the pioneers were pushed forward, the firing was pretty lively. Along the river the firing was more deadly. Very many, I fear, paid the penalty of the foolish challenge. The blame is undoubtedly due to the Yambuya, who must have invented fables of the most astounding character to cause their neighbours to attempt stopping a force of nearly 400 rifles."*

Results of the Emin Relief Expedition.

Mr. Stanley's so-called Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, in so far as its avowed object was concerned, only increased and ensured the mischief its original proposers desired to avert. Nor were the results of the uses to which it was perverted other than disastrous, except to the causers of the perversion and only in part even to them. The wanderings to and fro of Mr. Stanley's marauding host, in portions of what is now British East Africa as well as in Northern Congoland, being on a larger scale and more extensive and elaborate than anything previously attempted by him or by rivals like Lieutenant von Wissmann, established the system of wanton slaughtering and village burning, of wholesale robbery and reckless

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., pp. 136 8.

persecution, which has been followed by the Congo State for fifteen years.

The crowning folly or crime of the expedition, however, was in the treatment accorded to Tipu-Tipu. The bargains in accordance with which Tipu was formally appointed Governor of Stanley Falls district under King Leopold, and whereby he was enticed into promising carriers for the conveyance of stores and ammunition to Emin and deportation of his ivory, were none the less pernicious because they were both broken.

Tipu-Tipu at Stanley Falls.

Though Tipu was escorted to Stanley Falls along the whole length of the Lower and Middle Congo, and thus introduced to the vast expanse of territory and the millions of natives waiting to be "exploited," and as fair game to him and his "Arabs" as to the Congo State and its hangers-on, he was neither backed up in his office nor supplied with the ammunition he claimed in return for his supply of so-called carriers who, so far as they were provided, showed themselves to be nothing but slave-raiders. "It should be remembered," Major Barttelot wrote in March, 1888, "that Tipu is an officer of the State, but that up to the present no notice has been taken of him at all, and he feels justly aggrieved." * And Mr. Jameson, reporting Tipu's complaints in a conversation he had with him in the following May, said, "He has written to the King of the Belgians, asking him to send two officers and about thirty men to the Falls, not to assist him in any fighting, but as visible authority on behalf of the State during his own stay there, and in case of his absence at any time. But ever since the despatch of this letter, about a year ago, not a word have they sent him to the Falls. Tipu-Tipu naturally cannot understand this way of doing things, and looks upon it as a decided slight upon himself." † As it chanced,

* 'Diaries and Letters,' p. 220.

† 'Story of the Rear Column,' p. 293.

of the two Belgian officers who had been deputed to attend on Tipu one died on the way out and the other had to be invalided home. Mr. Herbert Ward, having been sent down by Major Barttelot to represent the state of the case, met at Leopoldville in April Lieutenant Baert, who had been designated for the work, but did not start on it till June, and had some noteworthy talk with him. "During a conversation with M. Baert upon the Arab situation up in the country about the Falls," Mr. Ward reported, "he said, 'Among us'—Belgian officers in the Congo Free State and in Brussels—'it was pronounced very short-sighted policy on Stanley's part appointing Tipu-Tipu to be chief of the Falls. It was Stanley who brought the Arabs to the Falls eleven years ago, and he is really the cause of their being where they are to-day.'" *

Mr. Stanley's arrangement with Tipu, though sanctioned by King Leopold, was evidently not approved by his subordinates on the Congo, who saw that the nominal enlistment of Tipu in the service of the State was actually a further recognition of his pretensions to complete and uncontrolled authority. Hence, in part, the long delay in sending up ostensible advisers to Tipu. When at length Captains Van Gèle and Van Kerckhoven arrived with Lieutenant Baert they were not able to exert any real influence.† Mr. Stanley, who at that time found no fault with Tipu, though he had then heard of all that had happened to Major Barttelot and the rear-column, wrote a very polite letter to him from Banalya on 17th August, mildly suggesting that he might at length be inclined to co-operate with the expedition. "And now, my friend, what are you going to do?" he asked, after describing his journeys across the forest and back. "We have gone the road twice over. We know where it is bad and where it is good. We know

* 'My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard,' p 119.

† M. Wauters ('L'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 59) strangely asserts that on 15th June, 1888, "la station des Falls était pacifiquement réoccupée par la force armée sous le commandement des capitains Van Gèle et Van Kerckhoven."

where there is plenty of food and where there is none, where all the camps are, and where we shall sleep and rest. I am waiting to hear your words. If you go with me, it is well. If you do not go with me, it is well also. I leave it to you. Whatever you have to say to me, my ears will be open with a good heart, as it has always been towards you."*

The Manyema Slave-Raiders.

Ten months before he wrote that letter, however—in October, 1887—in the north-eastern corner of Congoland, Mr. Stanley had had fresh evidence of the mischief done by some of the Manyema whom he was encouraging to extend their work near Stanley Falls. Here, he said, "half a dozen resolute men, aided by their hundreds of bandits, had divided about three-fourths of the great Upper Congo forest"—about 44,000 square miles round Ipoto—"for the sole purpose of murder and becoming heirs to a few hundred tusks of ivory." "They had levelled into black ashes every settlement," he reported; "every canoe on the rivers had been split into pieces; every island had been searched; and into the darkest recesses, wherever a slight track could be traced, they had penetrated with only one dominating passion, which was to kill as many of the men and capture as many of the women and children as craft and cruelty would enable them to do." "So many parts of the profits," he added, "are due to the great proprietor, such as Tipu-Tipu or Said-bin-Abed; a less number becomes the due of the headman; and the remainder becomes the property of the bandits. At other times, large ivories, over 35 lb. each, become the property of the proprietor; all over 20 lb. to 35 lb. belong to the headman; scraps, pieces, and young ivory are permitted to be kept by the lucky finders. Hence every member of the caravan is inspired to do his best."†

* Quoted by Mr. Ward in 'My Life with Stanley's Rear Guard,' p. 139.

† 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., pp. 226, 229.

Mr. Stanley on the African Ivory Trade.

"There is only one remedy for these wholesale devastations of African aborigines," Mr. Stanley—from whom we may now part company — pointed out, "and that is the solemn combination of England, Germany France, Portugal, South and East Africa, and the Congo State against the introduction of gunpowder into any part of the continent, except for the use of their own agents, soldiers and employés, or seizing upon every tusk of ivory brought out, as there is not a single piece nowadays which has been gained lawfully. Every tusk, piece and scrap in the possession of an Arab trader has been steeped and dyed in blood. Every pound weight has cost the life of a man, woman, or child; for every five pounds a hut has been burnt; for every two tusks a whole village has been destroyed; every twenty tusks have been obtained at the price of a district, with all its people, villages, and plantations. It is simply incredible that, because ivory is required for ornaments or billiard games, the rich heart of Africa should be laid waste, that populations, tribes and nations should be utterly destroyed. Whom, after all does this bloody seizure of ivory enrich? Only a few dozens of half-castes, Arab and Negro, who, if due justice were dealt to them, should be made to sweat out the remainder of their piratical lives in the severest penal servitude."*

Whatever force there may be in that reproach applies now, not to a few dozens of African half-castes, but to a few dozen or a few hundred European officials and adventurers.

Other Early Expeditions.

In the hope of deriving profit from the enormous territory entrusted to the care of King Leopold by the European Powers to whom Mr. Stanley appealed, and by others as well, some of the officials and adventurers were busy while Mr. Stanley was himself at work. Much was done

* 'In Darkest Africa,' Vol. I., p. 229.

in modest ways by Captain Van Gèle and others in exploration of the Ubangi, Welle, and other rivers feeding the Congo from the north and east, and camps for the warding off of Arab intruders, if possible, were set up by Lieutenant Dhanis at Basoko, near the mouth of the Aruwimi, in February, 1889, and by Lieutenant Roget at Djabir, on the Welle, in February, 1890. In the following April, moreover, Lieutenant Paul le Marinel set up another, for a like purpose, in the south, at Lusambo, on the Sankuru.

Commercial Enterprises.

These and kindred enterprises had for their avowed object the setting up or strengthening of the State's control over the territories assigned to it, with intentions still ostensibly strictly philanthropic and international. Others had avowedly commercial advantages in view, though under cover of compliance with the philanthropic and international conditions of the State's existence. It was in the interests of trading organisations, that a decree of the Sovereign was issued on 27th February, 1887, directing that all commercial societies should be duly constituted within approved limitations, one being that they should not own more than 10,000 hectares of land, or about thirty-eight square miles, without special authorisation.* Only two such societies appear to have been previously started—the Syndicat de Mateba, for agricultural developments in the island of that name in the Lower Congo, and the Sanford Exploring Expedition, founded by General Sanford, for procuring ivory and rubber from the interior; and of these the first was absorbed by the Compagnie des Produits du Congo, founded in November, 1888, and the second by the Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo, founded in December, 1888.

More important was the Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie, which was started in March,

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1887), p. 23.

1887, by Captain Thys and others, with a capital of 1,000,000 francs and a concession of 150,000 hectares, or about 477 square miles, of land, to be chosen anywhere in the basins of the Busira and the Momboyo, in the Bololo country, now the Équateur district, on condition that it should by the commencement of 1888 enter on the inquiries necessary for the construction of a railway between the Lower Congo and Stanley Pool.* The railway project was so arduous and costly that it had to be taken over by the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer, which was founded in July, 1889; but the preliminary researches for the railway were undertaken by the Compagnie du Congo, as it was generally styled, and on its behalf Captain Cambier inspected the lines of route most feasible between Matadi and Leopoldville. To its initiative also were due M. Alexandre Delcommune's studies as to the commercial opportunities of the region between Bangala and the Kasai, and on towards Katanga, which had for one of their results the formation of the Compagnie du Katanga as another offshoot of the Compagnie du Congo. Meanwhile the exigencies of its earlier offshoot, the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer, of which the initial capital was 25,000,000 francs, led to an application from the Congo State Government to the Belgian Government for a loan of 10,000,000 francs to be spent on the railway; and to secure the vote of the Belgian Parliament by which this loan was sanctioned King Leopold, on 2nd August, made a will bequeathing the Congo State to the Belgian nation, and, on 5th August, supplemented it by a letter to M. Beernaert, his Prime Minister at the time.

Both documents are remarkable.

King Leopold's Will of 1889.

"Wishing to assure to our well-beloved country the fruits of the work which for many years we have pursued in the African continent with the generous and devoted concurrence of many Belgians," the will declared, "convinced also that it will tend to secure for Belgium, if

* 'Bulletin Officiel,' pp. 55, 61.

she wishes, indispensable outlets for her commerce and her industry, and open new channels for the activity of her children, we declare by these presents that we bequeath and transmit to Belgium after our death all our sovereign rights over the Congo Free State which have been recognised by the declarations, conventions and treaties entered into since 1884 between foreign Powers on the one part and the Congo International Association and the Congo Free State on the other, together with all benefits, rights and advantages appertaining to that sovereignty. Until the Belgian Legislature announces its acceptance of our aforesaid dispositions the sovereignty will be exercised collectively by the Council of three Administrators of the Congo Free State and by the Governor-General."*

"I have never ceased from calling the attention of my compatriots to the necessity of turning their attention to countries beyond the sea," the King wrote to M. Beernaert, and, after referring to the examples of Greece and Venice in the past and of Holland in the present, he added, "It is in serving the cause of humanity and progress that communities of the second rank show themselves useful members of the great family of nations. More than any other, a maufacturing and trading nation like ours should strive to obtain outlets for the energy of all its toilers with mind, with money, or with hands. These patriotic views have guided my life. They have led to the creation of my African work. My labours have not been wasted; a young and spacious State, directed from Brussels, has pacifically appeared in the sunshine, thanks to the benevolent support of the Powers that have welcomed its appearance. Some Belgians administer it, whilst others, each day more numerous, there increase their wealth. The vast ramifications of the Upper Congo open rapid and economic channels of communication by which the centre of Africa can be directly reached. The construction of the Cataracts railway, henceforth assured, thanks to the recent

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 96.

vote of the Legislature, will notably increase the facilities of access. In these conditions a great future is before the Congo, the immense value of which will presently dazzle every eye. On the morrow of this achievement I have thought it my duty to place Belgium in a position, when death strikes me, to profit by my work and by the labour of those who have helped me in starting and guiding it." Hence this solemn testament. "The wealth of a Sovereign," King Leopold said in conclusion, "consists in the prosperity of his people. That alone can constitute in his eyes a treasure to be desired, and one that he should ever strive to augment. To the day of my death I shall continue, with the same regard for the national welfare which has prompted me hitherto, to direct and uphold our African enterprise; but if, without waiting till then, the country deems it well to tighten the bonds between it and my Congo possessions, I shall not hesitate to place them at its disposal. I shall be happy, while living, to see it in full enjoyment of them."*

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo,' p. 98.

CHAPTER VI.

The Brussels Conference [1889-1890].

Cardinal Lavigerie's Work.

Cardinal Lavigerie, the Archbishop of Algiers, who had started the Mission of the White Fathers in 1878, with a rescript from Pope Leo XIII. enjoining them to convert the Sudan and all Congoland to Christianity, and who had laboured zealously to that end for ten years, especially in opposition to Protestant efforts in the same or a rival direction, was the chief apostle in the anti-slavery crusade which, also sanctioned by Leo XIII., was started early in 1888, with the eager encouragement of King Leopold. It was in the Cathedral of Brussels that he opened the campaign of fiery eloquence which he carried on in many parts of Europe. On that occasion he reproached "the Catholics of Belgium" for their listlessness. "Your King," he exclaimed, "would open before you a country sixty times as large as your own, an immense field for proselytising and charity! You have not given to the diffusion of Christian truth, to the struggle with barbarism, the assistance that was incumbent on you."

The Brussels Conference of 1889-1890.

To this crusade is largely due the International Conference held in Brussels in the following years, though its more direct incentive was a letter, dated 17th September, 1888, addressed by the Marquis of Salisbury to Lord Vivian, the British Minister at the Belgian Court, suggesting that King Leopold should take the initiative in inviting all the civilised Powers to concert measures for "the gradual suppression of the slave-trade in the continent of Africa, and the immediate closing of all the external markets which it still supplies." As a result of the proposal, and of prolonged correspondence on it, King Leopold, on

24th August, 1889, issued invitations for the Conference which met in Brussels, under the presidency of Baron Lambermont, on 18th November, and which held the last of its thirty-three sittings on 2nd July, 1890. All the Powers taking part in the Berlin Conference of 1884-5 were here represented, with the addition of Persia; and, as was inevitable, the shares of the Belgian and Congo State Governments in the deliberations were considerable.

Claiming, as at Berlin, to speak "in the name of Almighty God," the signatories to the General Act of this Conference declared themselves to be "equally animated by the firm intention of putting an end to the crimes and devastations engendered by the traffic in African slaves, of protecting effectually the aboriginal populations of Africa, and of insuring for that vast continent the benefits of peace and civilisation." Most of the hundred articles drawn up in accordance with that expressed intention were admirable, and, had adequate provision for their enforcement been possible, the work of the Conference would have been of very great value. Unhappily many of the stipulations have been shamelessly neglected, and others have served as excuses and opportunities for fresh wrong-doing.

Its Anti-Slavery Provisions.

The second article, recognising that it is the principal duty of Powers having control over uncivilised races to prevent slave-raiding, prescribed for them the following among other subsidiary duties: "To support and, if necessary, to serve as a refuge for the native populations; to place those under their sovereignty in a position to co-operate for their own defence; to diminish intertribal wars by means of arbitration; to initiate the natives in agricultural pursuits and industrial arts, so as to increase their welfare; to raise them by civilisation and bring about the extinction of barbarous customs, such as cannibalism and human sacrifices; and, in giving aid to commercial enterprises, to watch over their legality, controlling espe-

cially the contracts for service entered into with natives." The eighth article, declaring that "the experience of all nations who have intercourse with Africa has shown the pernicious and preponderating part played by firearms in slave trade operations as well as in intertribal wars, and has clearly proved that the preservation of the African populations is a radical impossibility unless restrictive measures against the trade in firearms and ammunition are established," stipulated that, in all parts of Africa between the 20th parallel of north latitude and the 22nd parallel of south latitude, the importation of "firearms and especially of rifles and improved weapons, as well as of powder, balls and cartridges," should be carefully restricted and as far as possible prohibited. And in later articles arrangements were made for the carrying out of this prescription in detail and for what were considered necessary exceptions to it, the main exceptions being, of course, "the measures directly taken by Governments for the arming of a *force publique* and the organization of their defence." The perversion of these regulations, where they have not been ignored, has gone far to counteract, if it has not heavily overbalanced, the benefits resulting from the articles dealing with the actual slave trade, the supply of European liquor to natives, and so forth.

Its Supplementary Declaration.

The most important part of the Brussels General Act, however, was not any one of its hundred articles, but a supplementary Declaration introduced to the Conference on 10th May, 1890, at its thirteenth sitting, which was the chief subject of discussion during the subsequent sittings necessitated by it, and to which so much opposition was offered, especially by the Netherlands Government, that it was not signed till 2nd January, 1892, and that there was thus nearly two years' delay in the ratification of the Act. "Taking into consideration that the execution of the provisions adopted to put an end to the slave traffic, and to improve the moral and material conditions of

existence of the native populations, imposes on some of the Powers who have possessions or protectorates in the Conventional Basin of the Congo obligations which absolutely demand new resources to meet them," it was now proposed that the stipulation of the Berlin Conference prohibiting all import duties for twenty years should be withdrawn, and that "the signatory or assenting Powers having possessions or protectorates in the said Conventional Basin of the Congo shall be at liberty, so far as authority to this end is required, to establish duties on imported goods, the scale of which shall not exceed a rate equivalent to 10 per cent. ad valorem at the port of entry, always excepting spirituous liquors"—for which special arrangements were made in Articles 90 to 95 of the General Act. "Not only," said Baron Lambermont, in proposing this important change, "has geographical acquaintance with the Congo Basin revealed the wealth of the vast regions it comprises, but European commerce, which was blocked at a short distance from the coast, has penetrated the heart of Africa, in countries hitherto utterly unknown. Civilisation, in divers forms, has made no less progress, and has been permanently established in the very centre of Africa. The rapidity with which this transformation has been accomplished would seem to make it a duty to hasten the revision of the free trade rule temporarily laid down by the Berlin General Act. The protection due to commerce and missions, the establishment of systematic justice, the opening up of easier means of communication with the interior of the continent, the organisation of public services as auxiliaries to private enterprises, require financial resources which it is reasonable to obtain, by means of imposts, from those who profit by the new order of things. While in most of the African colonies tariffs are among the principal sources of revenue, the countries situated in the Conventional Basin of the Congo alone are deprived of the right of levying customs duties; and yet these are the countries that find themselves at the front in the crusade against the

slave-trade! The resolutions of the Brussels Conference, in imposing on them new tasks, will also increase the expenses necessary for the carrying out of their civilising mission. The legitimacy of import duties destined to meet these expenses cannot be denied."*

On this plea the proposal of the Congo State was agreed to with a readiness—except on the part of Holland—which would be inexcusable were it not that as yet the civilised world had very little information as to the real nature of the work that had been entered upon by the founders of the Congo State. Even Mr. Stanley's record of his and others' doings between the dates of the Berlin and the Brussels Conferences had not been published, and it was still generally believed, and by no others more than by philanthropists, that the task taken upon himself by King Leopold was without parallel as an effort of philanthropic statesmanship. Dutch traders were almost alone in at that time seeing through the specious arguments and pretences which satisfied others, and their discernment and foresight were prompted mainly, if not solely, by commercial jealousy and by a shrewd suspicion, amply justified by the results, that the 10 per cent. import duty now proposed would be a prelude and a stepping-stone to violation of all the free trade provisions of the Berlin Act no less flagrant and disastrous than has been the violation of its humanitarian professions.

The Congo State's Embarrassments.

Though little or no blame, however, may attach to the Powers that helped in drawing up the Brussels Act and sanctioned its Declaration, it is none the less to be deplored that they were beguiled into thus giving so much fresh encouragement and substantial support to the ambitious projects of the creator of the Congo State and his accomplices. Until after the event outsiders were as ignorant of

* 'Actes de la Conférence de Bruxelles' (1880), p. 283. The objections raised by Baron Gericke van Herwynen, the Netherlands representative, especially on 14th June (pp. 457-464), are noteworthy.

the financial exigencies that had been the principal though unavowed motive for the bringing about of the Brussels Conference as they were of the further wrongs that were being done to the African natives under a pretence of ensuring to them "the benefits of peace and civilisation." It was known that nearly the whole of the expenses incurred in the preliminary inquiries instituted in the names of the so-called International African Association of 1876 and its successors, as well as in the larger exploits of the Congo State subsequent to 1884—with the exception of the largest of all, the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, which others paid for—had been defrayed by the outlay of about 40,000,000 francs a year from the private fortune of the King of the Belgians, and that the burden was too heavy to be borne by him alone. This was one reason, valid and praiseworthy so far as it went, for the generous appreciation and genuine admiration shown to him and his enterprise both by the British and other Governments and by a sympathetic public, and expression of the widespread feeling was given with exceptional grace by Lord Vivian, the British representative at the Brussels Conference, in his endorsement of the proposed customs duty. But very few, probably, were aware of the straits to which the young Congo State had been reduced when, on 2nd July, 1890, the Brussels General Act received preliminary signature, subject to the Declaration being duly appended to it.

The Congo-Belgian Convention of 1890.

There was indication of the urgency in the fact that on the very next day a Convention, which had evidently been waiting for the adoption of the General Act, and which saved the Congo Government from bankruptcy, was entered into between it and the Belgian Government. As far back as 29th April, 1887, the Belgian Parliament had passed a law authorising the Congo State to raise a loan of 150,000,000 francs under conditions which, though not guaranteeing the debt, made the nation to some extent responsible for it. This had cleared the way for the start-

ing of chartered companies, provided for in the decree of 27th February, 1887, which has already been referred to. But more help was wanted; and King Leopold's will of 29th July, 1889, and the accompanying letter to M. Beernaert, also referred to, both of which were submitted to the Belgian Parliament on 4th August, 1890, were preparatory to the Convention which the dilatoriness of the Conference prevented from being signed before 3rd July, 1890.

By this document the Belgian State engaged to lend the Congo State 5,000,000 francs at once, and 2,000,000 francs a year for the next ten years, or 25,000,000 francs in all, on condition that Belgium should have the option, six months after the expiry of the ten years, of annexing the Congo State "with all the possessions, rights and advantages attached to the sovereignty of that State, as recognised and fixed, notably by the Berlin Act of 1885 and the Brussels Act and Declaration of 1890," provided it also assumed the obligations of the State to third parties, "the King-Sovereign expressly refusing any indemnity for the personal sacrifices made by himself," and on the understanding that "the special *régime* under which the Congo territories should thereafter be placed" should be regulated by law. "From the present time," it was further bargained, "the Belgian State shall receive from the Congo Free State such information as it deems desirable on the economic, commercial, and financial situation of the latter. It may, particularly, demand communication of the budgets of receipts and expenses, and of the customs' collections both on imports and on exports. This information is to have no other object than the enlightenment of the Belgian Government, and the latter shall not in any way interfere in the administration of the Congo Free State, which will continue to be connected with Belgium solely by the personal union of the two Crowns. Nevertheless, the Congo State pledges itself to contract no new loan hereafter without the consent of the Belgian Government." It was further stipulated that, while no interest was to be charged

in the intervening ten years, "if at the fixed term Belgium decides not to accept the annexation of the Congo State, the debt of 25,000,000 francs shall not become recoverable until after another term of ten years, but it shall bear interest at 3½ per cent., payable half-yearly, and even before this time it will be the duty of the Congo Free State to apply in partial repayments all sums obtained from cessions of lands or mines in the domain."*

Having served its purpose in inducing the Belgian nation to invest 25,000,000 francs in King Leopold's undertaking, and to make itself in some measure responsible for his management of the Congo State, without right of control or interference of any sort, the Convention became at once, as we shall see, if not a dead letter, something very much worse.

* Cattier, pp. 120, 122.

CHAPTER VII.

Commercial Developments [1890-1893].

While the Brussels Conference was, along with other concerns, deciding on measures to be taken for the suppression of slave-raiding and slave-trading in Central Africa, and before sanction was obtained for the Declaration appended to the General Act of the Conference by which the Congo State was authorised to levy import dues as a contribution towards its expenses in carrying out those measures, steps were in progress for turning to account the commercial opportunities of the country and developing the financial enterprises to which the decisions of the Conference gave fresh impetus.

Preparing for Exploitations.

The preliminary stages of this movement have already been indicated. We have seen that, whereas an ordinance of 14th September, 1886, forbade "all acts or agreements which tend to the expulsion of the natives from the territories they occupy, or to deprive them, either directly or indirectly, of their liberty or their means of subsistence," other ordinances, dated 25th July and 17th October, 1889, took from the natives their hitherto undisputed right to collect ivory or rubber without special permission, and declared that "all usages and customs having the force of law and contrary to this edict are abrogated."* Mention has also been made of the Compagnie du Congo pour le Commerce et l'Industrie which, originated in December, 1886, by the energetic Captain Thys and others, obtained an important concession from the Congo Government in March, 1887, and soon afterwards became the parent or foster-parent of several subordinate companies, of which the earliest were the Syndicat de Mateba, absorbed by the

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1886), p. 138; (1889), p. 169.

Compagnie des Produits du Congo in November, 1889, and the Sanford Exploring Expedition, which was taken over by the Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce du Haut-Congo in the following month. Besides these was a Compagnie des Magasins Généraux, started in October, 1888.

The Earlier Trading Companies.

General Sanford, the American supporter of King Leopold's project from its inception, and, in conjunction with M. Georges Brugmann, the founder of the association bearing his name, may be regarded as the pioneer of the direct trade with the natives of the interior in ivory and rubber which has been attended by such appalling mischief. But the business, while under his management, appears to have been honestly carried on; its principal agent during the earlier operations being Mr. E. J. Glave, an able and high-minded young Englishman who, at Lukolela and other starting-places of commercial exploitation in what is now the Équateur district, found that even cannibals can be made friends of and raised in civilisation by just and generous treatment, but by that alone.

For a few years, however, this and all other direct commerce with the interior was very small; and, if the adventurers who rallied round King Leopold desired from the first to supersede the Europeans already in the field, it was not possible for them to do so in a hurry. Most of the trade was carried on by the French firm of Daumas, Béraud et Cie., successors of the old house of Regis et Cie., established at Banana in 1858, and by the Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap, of Rotterdam, which opened a branch at Boma in 1860; as well as by the agents of Hatton & Cookson, of Liverpool, and of the Portuguese firm of Valle & Azevedo, who were established there a few years later. They could not for some time be materially interfered with, indeed, except in the way of checking real or alleged abuses, under the provisions for complete freedom of commerce laid down by the Berlin Conference in 1885. At that date, notwithstanding the changes made by Mr.

Stanley seven years before, among sixteen Europeans doing business in Boma there was only one Belgian, M. Alexandre Delcommune, and he was an agent of the French house.* M. Delcommune promptly transferred his allegiance to the Congo State, and associated with him were Major Parminter, an Englishman, and others as representatives of the Société du Haut-Congo which took over the Sanford organisation in 1888. Under their guidance researches beyond Boma were vigorously pursued in the following years; but until 1890, at any rate, there was little actual or profitable commerce except in competition with the older and independent firms planted in the Lower Congo.

The obstacles to river traffic above Vivi and Matadi, caused by the numerous cataracts between the latter place and Leopoldville, had to be removed—first by improved roadways, and afterwards, more effectively, by the railway which was only completed in 1898—before ivory and other African produce could be brought down in any considerable quantity to the European factories at the mouth of the Congo, there to be exchanged for imported commodities, of which poisonous spirits and murderous guns and gunpowder continued to form the principal part; and meanwhile it was not easy to disturb the long-standing arrangements by which local chiefs and tribes on both sides of the troubled waters acted as intermediaries between the white traders near the coast and the black population further inland. Consequently neither the Compagnie des Magasins, which applied itself to the setting up of warehouses and dwelling-places, nor the Compagnie des Produits, which aimed at the encouragement of agricultural enterprises, both in the Lower Congo, had the success anticipated for them.

The Proposed Railway. As far back as 1878 Mr. Stanley had insisted on the necessity for a railway connecting Matadi, at one end of the Cataracts

* Wauters, p. 386.

region, with Stanley Pool, at the other; and, in anticipation of its construction, he established in 1883 a new route for the carriage of goods by hand, or rather on the heads of natives, mainly along the track ultimately followed by the railway. For this route the southern side of the river was chosen instead of that on the northern side, which had been in favour hitherto, and, through the systematic pressure put on the neighbouring chiefs for the supply of native labour at a nominal average wage of a franc and a half per diem, the State authorities were able to procure the conveyance of about 12,000 loads in 1885, nearly twelve times as many as were carried under their direction in 1882. The number increased to at least 50,000 in 1887, and 80,000 in 1893.* Long before the latter date, however, the enormous waste of life and other inconveniences incident to this mode of transport had furnished additional and conclusive arguments for the proposed railway. It was chiefly to meet the exigency, as an essential preliminary and accessory to its general scheme for widening the field of exploitation by means of a railway, that the Compagnie du Congo was started before the close of 1886. It was then supposed that a couple of years or so would suffice for the work. The two years only served to show that the task assumed by the Compagnie du Congo was far beyond the powers with which it had been invested, and for its performance a separate corporation, the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer du Congo, had to be organised with a capital of 25,000,000 francs, the amount for which it was estimated that about 260 miles of railroad between Matadi and Leopoldville could be constructed in the course of four years and provided with suitable rolling-stock and all other requisites. The inception and execution of this enterprise have had momentous bearings on the subsequent history of the Congo State.

The new company received its charter on 31st July,

* Wauters, pp. 347, 348.

1889. Two days before that, at the instigation of M. Beernaert, the then Prime Minister, the Belgian Parliament had voted 10,000,000 francs as a contribution to its capital, and as an incentive to the subscribers of the balance of 15,000,000 francs, among whom, besides the leading financiers of Brussels, were three German bankers and, represented by Sir William Mackinnon, several British investors.* Thus, seeing that, although the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer was ostensibly independent of the Congo State, the one was merely an offshoot and agent of the other, the hold of the State on the support of European financiers as well as of the Belgian nation was materially strengthened. This hold was further increased, as also were the complications incident to it, by the difficulties that compelled King Leopold, on behalf of the State or of the railway company, to apply to the Belgian Parliament in 1894 for an additional contribution, under conditions to be detailed hereafter.

Meanwhile the four years allowed for completion of the whole railway were exhausted in the laying of its first twenty-six miles, stupendous obstacles having to be overcome in twisting through the channels blasted by dynamite through the Palabala Mountain, and in other operations which were ill-prepared for, and disastrous in their effects on the native labourers coaxed or forced into the service. Between January, 1890, when the work was actually commenced, and May, 1892, it is admitted that, out of 4,500 employed, 900 died of the disease and fatigue to which they were exposed, and that hundreds of others had to be sent home to die. "These calamities caused consternation among the reduced contingents. Desertions became more numerous, and there was complete demoralisation among the blacks."† From the first what may be called skilled labour was largely imported by the railway officials from Lagos, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and other parts of West Africa, for which wages at the rate of from £2 to £8

* Wauters, p. 359. † *Ibid.*, p. 360.

a month were paid, instead of the 1 fr. 25 c. a day given to the natives on the spot, in addition to "food, housing, and medical attendance." The hardships to which these British subjects were exposed, however, and their compulsory detention—if they survived—beyond the two years for which they were engaged so vexed them, and led to their sending home such unfavourable reports as to their treatment, that further recruiting of coloured labour for the Congo was forbidden in the British colonies,* and measures all the more violent had in consequence to be resorted to in procuring the requisite amount of labour on the spot.

The Railway Force Publique.

To this end the railway company was authorised to set up a military organisation of its own, more or less distinct from the Congo State's native army. On 9th August, 1890, indeed, nearly a year before the *force publique* was definitely established, a railway auxiliary force or militia was sanctioned by royal decree,† and Captain Weyns was commissioned to recruit and discipline fifty men for the purpose. The number was doubled early in 1892, and soon afterwards increased to 150. The avowed object was protection of the railway works and the labourers employed on them from the hostility of outsiders, but the real occupations of the auxiliary force differed little from slave-catching and slave-driving. At first it was chiefly drawn from the coloured British subjects, recruited as artisans and the like; and one of the principal complaints made by the men so employed was that, in violation of their contracts, they were compelled to engage in disreputable and dangerous

* In answer to a question asked in the House of Commons on 12th March, 1896, Mr. Chamberlain, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, stated that "complaints had been received of these British subjects having been employed without their consent as soldiers, and of their having been cruelly flogged, and in some cases shot," and he added, "They were engaged with the knowledge of Her Majesty's representatives, and every possible precaution was taken in their interests; but, in consequence of the complaints received, the recruitment of labourers for the Congo has been prohibited."—*Times*, 13th March, 1896.

† 'Bulletin Officiel' (1890), p. 129.

sorts of soldiership. When this source of supply was closed resort was had to the savages of the Middle Congo region, who were already being employed in the larger *force publique*, and the change certainly brought no relief to the unfortunate natives of the Lower Congo, who were impressed for the construction of the line of railway on which more than all the company's capital of 25,000,000 francs had been spent, though barely a tenth of the ground had been covered, before March, 1894.

The Compagnie du Congo.

As there was so much unlooked for delay in the completion of the Lower Congo railway, the responsibility for which had been assigned by the Compagnie du Congo to the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer, the parent corporation was able to apply itself with all the more energy to attempts at effective occupation of the interior territories that it was hoped the railway, when finished, would make profitable to the appropriators. Several expeditions were accordingly undertaken with this avowed object, in addition to others, ostensibly philanthropic in intention, which will be referred to hereafter.

Of the strictly commercial enterprises the most important were those which aimed at the acquisition of the regions between Nyangwe, Lake Tanganyika, and the southern frontier claimed by the Congo State, and there were special reasons for prompt enterprise in this direction, as it was known that occupation of, at any rate, a portion of the district was desired by the British South Africa Company, lately started by Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

The Compagnie du Katanga.

As a result of the preliminary report of M. Delcommune, who in April, 1890, was sent out by the Compagnie du Congo to make the necessary investigations, yet another offshoot of that company was established in March, 1891, as the Compagnie du Katanga, with a capital of 3,000,000 francs, and an international directorate including Sir William Mackinnon, Sir John Kirk, and the

French banker, M. Bunau-Varilla. The gold, copper, and other minerals supposed to be plentiful in the Katanga district being the great attraction, preferential rights over all the mines in it were accorded to the company for twenty years, with further privileges, on condition that, besides other stipulations, within three years two steamers should be launched on the affluents of the Upper Congo or the adjacent lakes and at least three stations established within the district.*

The Appropriation of Katanga.

So keen were the magnates of the Congo State in their desire to prevent the supposed prize from falling into the hands of any but themselves that, before the company's formation, Captain Paul le Marinel, then in charge of the Lusambo station, on the Sankuru, which he had set up in the previous year, had been ordered to proceed at once as a State official to Bunkeia, the headquarters of the native chief Msiri, there to assist M. Delcommune in the further action assigned to him, and that two other parties were, with as little delay as possible, fitted out by the company itself. Both of these latter left Europe in May, 1891. One, proceeding by way of Zanzibar and through German East Africa, was entrusted to Captain W. G. Stairs, a native of Nova Scotia, who had accompanied Mr. Stanley in the Emin Pasha Relief Expedition, and with whom were Dr. J. A. Moloney and a Belgian officer, Lieutenant Bodson. The other party was under Captain Bia, also a Belgian officer, whose principal assistant was Lieutenant Francqui, and who followed Le Marinel by the Sankuru route. Having but a short distance to traverse, Le Marinel was the first to reach Bunkeia, arriving on 16th April, 1891, nearly six months before Delcommune, whose boats were wrecked in the Lualaba rapids, and who was not on the spot until 6th October. Both had quitted Bunkeia to make explorations in the neighbourhood, leaving Lieutenant Legat to keep watch over Msiri, before

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1891), pp. 243, 251.

the appearance, on 14th December, of Stairs, who was joined by Bia on 30th January in the next year.*

Msiri, it must be explained, was a native of Garenganze, the son of one of the Negro associates of the so-called Arab and Portuguese dealers in slaves and ivory, who, having grown rich and powerful by continuing his father's trade had usurped supremacy over the Baluba and other occupants of the Katanga district, and had set up a far-reaching tyranny, after the example of Tipu-Tipu and others. He was spoken fairly well of by the Rev. F. S. Arnot and other Protestant missionaries whom he allowed to settle among his people; but Mr. Alfred Sharpe, afterwards Sir Harry Johnston's assistant and successor in the administration of the British Central African Protectorate, described him as "a wicked and quarrelsome old man, who believed that every foreigner who came to his country had the intention of seizing it." The belief was not without justification. Alarmed by the fate that had befallen so many of his neighbours and rivals among African chieftains, Msiri would not listen to the suggestion of Mr. Sharpe, who visited him in November, 1890, as the agent of the British South Africa Company, that he should fall into a trap similar to that which had been laid for Lobengula, the Matabele despot, and he appears, in the following April and October, to have acted with great shrewdness in resisting the overtures of M. Le Marinel and M. Delcommune without openly defying them. When Captain Stairs arrived in December he found, according to Dr. Moloney, that Le Marinel's lieutenant, M. Legat, "had undoubtedly obtained a marked ascendancy over the Wanyamwezi potentate, considering the handful of men at his disposal," but that Msiri, "with senile cunning,

* As my principal authority for statements as to these and other expeditions of which detailed accounts are not here necessary, and for further information about them, it may be sufficient to refer to the columns of 'Le Mouvement Géographique,' the official magazine of the Compagnie du Congo, edited by M. A. J. Wauters. In 'With Captain Stairs to Katanga' (1893), Dr. Moloney gives a lively report of his share in the work.

evidently proposed to foment jealousies between white and white, and so to preserve his independence by a judicious course of trimming."

To this policy Captain Stairs speedily put an end. At the close of a stormy interview on 19th December, 1891, after Msiri had been bullied into promising that he would "accept the Belgian symbol of sovereignty on the morrow," though he refused at once to hoist the flag that Stairs had with him, the flag was summarily hoisted by Stairs himself. Next day, Msiri having retired to a village three miles off, Bodson was sent with a force of 115 men to arrest him, and in the scuffle that ensued both Bodson and Msiri were killed. Stairs also lost his life in this filibustering enterprise; but his death did not occur till June, long after he had installed Msiri's son, Makanda Vanta, as "ruler of the fourteen square miles on which Bunkeia stands," had set up other petty chiefs in other parts of Katanga, and had left Captain Bia, who had arrived by this time, to administer the whole district on behalf of the Congo State.

These discreditable and for the most part disastrous proceedings occupied the earlier months of 1892, as well as most of the previous year, and all the excursions and aggressions incident to them, including much fighting and annexing by M. Le Marinel and M. Delcommune before and after their visits to Bunkeia, merely aggravated the disorder that resulted in subsequent trouble to the agents of the Katanga Company. But their primary object was attained by the defeat of the British South Africa Company's plans to gain possession of this part of Congo-land.

Troubles in the Arab Zone.

Meanwhile disorder and trouble in the more northern districts, at that time known as the Zone Arabe, in which the Société du Haut-Congo sought to establish a monopoly of conquest and exploitation, were threatening immediate ruin to the State. An organisation claiming to

be purely philanthropic, and styling itself the Société Anti-Esclavagiste de Belgique, had been started in 1889, with the avowed object of supporting and helping to carry out the proposals of the Berlin Conference as regards the suppression of the Central African slave trade, and in 1890 and 1891 had organised expeditions from the western shores of Lake Tanganyika, under the command of Captain Joubert and Captain Jacques, for the overthrow of the Arab dominion between Nyangwe and Stanley Falls. These proceedings, which will presently be referred to more in detail, were in intentional or unintentional co-operation with those of a more formidable expedition entrusted by the Compagnie du Katanga to M. Hodister, with the object of acquiring for that company control over a part, at any rate, of the ivory-collecting facilities coveted by the Société du Haut-Congo. From the confused and contradictory reports as to M. Hodister's movements the precise facts cannot be discovered. His own letters,* however, show that he allowed himself to be entrapped by the Arab chiefs with whom he had opened negotiations, who let him enter into direct trading relations with the natives and then organised a "rebellion" at Nyangwe, Riba-Riba, and elsewhere. In consequence of his rashness he and at least two other Belgians, as well as several of his native followers, were killed on 15th May, 1892, and other castastrophes ensued which furnished excuse for more extensive crusading with the assumed purpose of crushing Arab power in Congoland in the interests of humanity.

The Commercial Revolution.

By these and similar operations the huge territory assigned to the Congo State's management was, perforce, being more and more converted into a preserve for the commercial advantage, if possible, of the State itself and its favourites. But, in spite of increasing hindrances, some of the older trading enterprises, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English, continued to thrive, and two of them in

* *Indépendance Belge*, 28th July, 1892; *Times*, 13th August, 1892.

particular, the Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap, or Société Hollandaise, and the Société Française Daumas, Béraud et Cie., had extended their activity to Stanley Pool. The former still exists, but the latter was in April, 1892, bought up and absorbed by the Société du Haut-Congo, its steamers and other appliances being largely employed in the commercial explorations then going on in and beyond the Ubangi. By this time, moreover, even the Compagnie du Congo and its offshoots, as well as its foreign rivals, had ample grounds for chagrin and alarm at the new policy which was being adopted towards them, and which was an immediate outgrowth of the State's own employment of military expeditions in opening up fresh markets for its own commercial advantage.

That policy cannot be more clearly described than in the words of one of its foremost apologists. "It is characterised," according to M. Wauters, "(1) by the State's enforcement of its right to monopolise to its own profit the produce of the vacant lands of the territory; (2) by the appearance of new commercial societies, endowed with concessions and privileges and constituted with a view to the exploitation of the *domaine privé*, with the moral and effective support of the State." * By it all the adventurers whom the Congo Government had favoured and found useful to it in the early building up of its fortunes and of theirs—Major Thys, Major Parminter, M. Brugmann, M. Jules Urban, M. de Roubaix, and many more—were threatened with ruin unless they consented to adapt themselves to the fresh tactics devised by the Sovereign of the State and his immediate advisers for defying and outraging, far more thoroughly than heretofore, the stipulations of the Berlin Conference, which had been re-affirmed for the most part and added to by the Brussels Conference, as regards alike the maintenance of free trade in Congoland and equitable dealing with its native inhabitants.

Another outspoken and a more explicit statement, made

* Wauters, p. 394.

by Major Parminter, the most important of the Englishmen associated in early Congo exploitation, at a time when he was smarting under the treatment accorded to himself, must be quoted.* "When the Congo State was created," he wrote in 1892, "commerce received the most formal and complete assurances from it that never, either directly or indirectly, would the Government trade or traffic within its dominions. Once that official trade was started, however, it came into competition with general commerce, and then ensued, very logically and very naturally, the most strained relations between the State officials and the representatives of trade. The Government found one pretext after another for closing successively all those buying stations of traders in which the most lucrative trade could be done, and then substituted itself for the expelled traders, and purchased from the natives without fear of competition. The consecutive theories which the State has introduced into its political economy tend to constitute a State monopoly of trade, and one directly contrary to the text as well as to the spirit of the Berlin Act. The Powers assembled at Berlin in 1885 desired to throw open to the commerce of the world the rich basin of the Congo. The deliberations of the Conference resulted in the recognition of the hereditary rights of the natives to their soil, and in the proclamation that all, aborigines as well as aliens, were to possess unrestricted liberty of trading throughout the length and breadth of the land. Business, in a word, was to be open to free competition, without any restrictions whatever. No privileges, no monopolies, of any sort or nature, were to hamper the development of the country. The signatory Powers, foreseeing the possibility of some future revision of the

The State as Monopolist Trader.

* This statement and documents in support of it, some of which are quoted above, were handed to me by Major Parminter near the end of 1892, when he sought the assistance of the Aborigines Protection Society in exposing the conduct of the Congo Government. His testimony is none the less valuable because he soon after made his peace with, or was pacified by, King Leopold.

principles thus proclaimed, placed on record in the protocol that in no case could modifications be introduced which tended to hamper the liberty of trade through the creation of monopolies or of privileges. The decrees of the Congo State, in the matter of trading in ivory, rubber, or other products, constitute a flagrant violation of the text and of the spirit of the Berlin Act. An ordinance dated 1st July, 1885, states that 'no one may dispossess any native of lands occupied by him,' and further that 'all vacant ground is considered as belonging to the State.' To-day, however, the Government of the Congo State interprets the term 'vacant' as meaning *all* the territory of the State, excepting only the sites of the native villages and the gardens of such villages. The forests and plains, the hills and the valleys, in fact the whole of the Basin of the Congo and its affluents, in the eyes of the State, are its own private property! Their fruits belong exclusively to it, and not only are aliens debarred from trading, but even the aborigines themselves are no more allowed to traffic freely. No later than January last one of the District Commissaries wrote in a letter, 'The aborigines of the district of Ubangi-Welle are not permitted to gather rubber. It has been notified to them that they can only obtain permission to do so on condition that they gather the produce for the exclusive benefit of the State.' Such a theory is a violation of the natural rights of the aborigines, recognised even by the earlier legislation of the State. It deprives them of the right of gathering any products of the forests and the plains, which are the common property of their tribes, and in which their forefathers from all time have enjoyed every freedom, have hunted unhindered, and have gathered the juice of the palm-tree, the sap of the rubber-vine, and any and all other products which abound in the country. It is contrary also to the spirit which animated the signatory Powers, who, when creating a political State in the Basin of the Congo, certainly had no intention of depriving the native tribes of

their hereditary rights, and that, too, for the exclusive profit of the State which they had called into existence. To sum up, the application of the new decrees of the Government signifies this, that the State considers as its private property the whole of the Congo Basin, excepting the sites of the natives' villages and gardens. It decrees that all the products of this immense region are its private property, and it monopolises the trade in them. As regards the primitive proprietors, the native tribes, they are dispossessed by a simple circular; permission is graciously granted to them to collect such products, but only on condition that they bring them for sale to the State for whatever the latter may be pleased to give them. As regards alien traders, they are prohibited in all this territory from trading with the natives."

The Domaine Privé.

The first of the decrees referred to by Major Parminter, dated 25th July, 1889, and depriving natives of their right to hunt elephants throughout the territories of the State, has been already cited. It was followed by a decree, dated 9th July, 1890, professing "to regulate the collection of ivory in the State, so as to favour free trade." According to this document, "the Government surrenders absolutely to general commerce the collection of ivory throughout all those portions of the domains of the State, situated beyond Stanley Pool, which are directly accessible to steamers in the Congo or its affluents, within a distance of fifty kilomètres on either side of the rivers indicated." But for the rest of the territory it reserved to itself the right of trading in ivory, concurrently with other traders, and the charges it imposed on others for the privilege of trading were almost prohibitive, a tax of two francs per kilogramme being appointed for the "free trade" localities, and one of double the amount for all the "reserved" areas, with an additional duty of two francs on every kilogramme exported.* These extortions were trivial, however, in

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1890), p. 80.

comparison with those consequent on another decree, signed on 29th September, 1891, but never published in the *Bulletin Officiel*, which stated that "by reason of the considerable cost of the first occupation of the countries, the commissaries of the districts of the Aruwimi, the Welle, and the Ubangi will take the urgent measures necessary to preserve for the use of the State the fruits of its domains, especially ivory and rubber."* On Captain Baert, the Commissary of the Bangala district, till then the most distant part of the region north of the Congo river over which any sort of organised government was attempted, devolved the immediate responsibility of enforcing this secret decree as soon as the "first occupation" of the region had been sufficiently effected by Captain Georges le Marinel and the other pioneers of conquest therein. And Captain Baert was a zealous official. One of the mandates issued by him, dated 15th December, 1891, extended the operation of the royal decrees of the previous July and September as regards ivory to the Mogwandi and Mobuaka portions of his district. In another of the same date, which like its forerunners must have been prompted by his superiors in Brussels, he established a similar rule as regards "the gathering of rubber or any other vegetable products in the Congo or its affluents above Bolobo." Under the second document natives were to be "authorised"—a pleasing synonym for "compelled"—to collect such "products of the royal domains," but "only for the exclusive profit of the State," and, severe penalties being prescribed for violation of the rule, it was added "All officers, non-commissioned officers, civil servants,

* I was favoured by Major Parminter with the above translation, also with the following extract from a letter written by Captain Baert, dated 18th January, 1892: "I have the honour to inform you that the chief of the post of Bumba has merely put into execution the decision taken by me, dated 15th December, 1891, in virtue of the decree of 29th September, 1891. The natives of the district of Ubangi-Welle are not authorised to gather rubber. It has been notified to them that they can only receive permission to do so on condition that they gather the produce for the exclusive benefit of the State."

and chiefs of stations are hereby empowered to search out and investigate all infractions of the present decision, and to ensure its execution." In keeping with these instructions was an imperious letter from the commandant of the Ubangi-Welle expedition himself, dated 14th February, 1892. "I have decided," wrote Captain le Marinel from Yakoma, "to enforce rigorously the rights of the State over its domain, and, in consequence, cannot allow the natives to convert to their own profit, or to sell to others, any part of the rubber or ivory forming the fruits of the domain. Traders who purchase, or attempt to purchase, such fruits of this domain from the natives—which fruits the State only authorises the natives to gather subject to the condition that they are brought to it—render themselves, in my opinion, guilty of receiving stolen goods, and I shall denounce them to the judicial authorities, so that proceedings may be taken against them."

Nor was it only in the remoter parts of the Congo State's territory, not hitherto exploited, that this arbitrary policy was pursued. More alarming, in some respects, than the tyranny established in the Bangala district, and beyond it, was the similar action now taken in localities that had for several years been open to general trade. Of this there is evidence in an edict issued by Lieutenant Lemaire, Commissary of the Équateur district, on 3rd May, 1892. "Considering that no concession has been granted to gather rubber in the domains of the State within this district," he announced "(1) that natives can only gather rubber on condition of selling the same to the State, (2) that any person or persons or vessels having in his or their possession, or on board, more than one kilogramme of rubber will have a 'procès verbal' drawn up against him or them or it"; and, it was added, "the ship can be confiscated without prejudice to any subsequent proceedings."

There was scarcely any secrecy as to the motives for these oppressive restrictions on the trading rights of

Europeans, and even of some of the companies chartered by the Congo Government, as well as of the natives. Less than a year before the date of M. Lemaire's scandalous edict M. Beernaert, the Belgian Prime Minister, had been interrogated in the Belgian Parliament as to the extensive trade that, according to public rumour, the Congo Government was already carrying on. "It is alleged," he said, "that the Congo State is one vast factory, that it wishes to reserve for itself a monopoly of trade, that no sooner do our Belgian officers touch African soil than they become merely a sort of bagmen. Figures will enable us to ascertain exactly how much truth there is in these assertions. It happens, and still happens, that officers commanding expeditions which explore new regions purchase for the State a certain number of elephants' tusks. It can scarcely be otherwise. These populations, brought for the first time into contact with white men, cannot understand that a journey may be undertaken with any other end or aim than trading. Friendly relations must be opened, and confidence inspired. But what was the extent of the commercial operations of the State in 1890? The total value of ivory purchased by its agents was about 119,000 francs." Interrogated again in May, 1892, M. Beernaert stated that the value of the ivory purchased by the State in 1891 was about 650,000 francs, but that this supply came solely from the opening up of country hitherto unvisited by white men, and was in the nature of tribute and in no way the result of trade.

The Prime Minister's appeals to such figures as were furnished by the Congo Government were unfortunate. The records of sales in the Antwerp market showed that there alone, up to 3rd November, 1892, the State had sold more than 3,000,000 francs' worth of ivory, besides all the sales in the Hamburg and London markets for which no statistics were obtainable. "The continuity and progressive importance of the sales made by the State," according to the unimpeachable testimony of Major Par-

minter in that month, "no longer allow it to pretend that the ivory it imports is the mere product of presents and tributes from native chiefs in districts hitherto closed to white men. However much the State may wish to hide from the eyes of Europe that it has organised a complete system of trading in its stations in the Basin of the Congo, out in Africa it makes no attempt at concealment. In every district where a profitable trade may be done it has opened buying stations, and it has, on one pretext or another, driven away the general trader, even in cases where he had been actually established before the State appeared on the scene. In certain districts the State has traded openly in guns and powder; for instance, in the Upper Ubangi, where one of the great chiefs, Bangaso by name, is to this day still paying off in ivory a debt contracted with the State for several hundred guns and a quantity of powder and caps sold to him. The trading firms which were at that time established in these regions were not allowed to trade in guns or powder, it being, said the State, contrary to the stipulations of the Brussels Conference. These traders have since been suppressed by the State. It found that they still managed to do a little trade with the natives, notwithstanding all the State's competition, so that the District Commissaries found it simpler to close their factories entirely—in one instance on grounds of public safety, in others by compelling the natives to sell their ivory and other produce only to the State."

"Commerce, which by the decision of the Berlin Conference was to enjoy complete liberty, finds itself in the following position," said Major Parminter, in summing up his indictment. "It pays import duties varying from 6 to 30 per cent. on all articles imported. It pays export duties on ivory from 10 to 25 per cent., according to whence the ivory comes. It pays threepence a pound-weight export duty on rubber. It pays all manner of heavy taxes on carriers, on labourers, on clerks, on lands, on buildings, on enclosures, on steamers, boats, canoes,

and on the firewood used for steamers, &c. Even then it is only permitted to do business to a small extent. It is prohibited from trading in the goods in which its chief competitor—the State itself—trades; and it has to pay to this very same competitor the heavy duties aforementioned."

The indignation with which all this defiance of the Berlin General Act was regarded by those it victimised was legitimate. The Nieuwe Afrikaansche Handels-Vennootschap, of Rotterdam, being among the chief sufferers by the decree of 9th July, 1890, promptly transferred some of its agents to Portuguese territory, and the rest to the French Congo, where they remained for a couple of years; and to the ill-feeling thus engendered must be in large measure attributed the prolonged opposition of the Netherlands Government to the Brussels General Act, and its refusal to sign the declaration appended thereto before January, 1892. The protests of Major Thys, Major Parminter, and the other leading members of the Compagnie du Congo and its offshoots brought about a partial compromise, enabling them to participate in the arrangements by which the Congo Government had reorganised its commercial policy, but not lessening the betrayal of all the nations concerned in the Berlin and Brussels Conferences, through the conversion of nearly the whole of the territory entrusted to the State for the common benefit into a *domaine privé*. Henceforward, moreover, the older speculators, known as the Rue Bréderode group, from the Brussels street in which their offices were located, found themselves in jealous opposition to the newer speculators, known as the Antwerp group.

That the Congo Government should permanently carry on, as an actual part of its administrative and executive machinery, all the trade in which it proposed to be the principal profit-sharer was not, of course, possible. In February, 1893, as the result of plans laid long before, it chartered two new companies, empowered to deal in novel

ways with those portions of its *domaine privé* in which it was then specially interested.

The Société Anversoise.

The first of these companies was the Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo, started with a capital of 400,000 francs, afterwards raised to 1,250,000 francs, and with M. Browne de Tiège, the great Antwerp financier, as its president, to which was granted, for a term of thirty years, and renewable afterwards, a concession of the *forêts domaniales* in the basin of the Mongala, comprising nearly all that was of value in the Bangala district, with an exclusive right to traffic in the entire produce of the forests and to appropriation, during the same term, of all the *terres domaniales* there situated. In return for these privileges the company undertook to pay to the State taxes at the rate of 300 francs on every 1,000 kilogrammes of rubber collected, 150 francs on a like quantity of wax or copal, and 5 per cent. on the value of all ivory and other produce sold in the European markets. As the State held 50 per cent. of the shares in this monopolist association, considerably more than half of the profits was thus assured to it.*

The Abir.

The State had a similar stake in the other association, the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber and Exploration Company, generally known by its initials as the A.B.I.R., or Abir, which was founded on 6th February with a capital of 1,000,000 francs. Notwithstanding its title and the fact that the late Colonel North was its first president, only a few of the half of its shares not held by the State were in English hands, and it was virtually a Belgian monopoly, invested with complete ownership of the so-called vacant lands claimed as State domain in the basins of the Lopori and the Maringa—that is, of the northern half of the Équateur district traversed by those tributaries of the Congo—and with an exclusive right for thirty years to all its forest produce.†

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1893), p. 29; Wauters, p. 395.

† 'Bulletin Officiel' (1893), p. 33; Wauters, p. 395.

No other organisations of the same sort were started before 1894, but the Société des Produits Végétaux du Haut-Kasai was one of several to which concessions were then granted in other parts of the Congo State's territory. At the end of 1897 and the beginning of 1898, moreover, important changes were introduced on the occasion of the formation of the Société Générale Africaine and of the reconstruction of the Société Anversoise and the Abir.

Legalisation of the Domaine Privé.

Definitive shape and formal sanction of law, such as it was, had, however, been given to all such assumptions of State proprietorship in any lands proclaimed as *domaine privé*, and available for parcelling out to *commerce privé*, by a decree dated 30th October, 1892. This decree, like so many others, made a pretence of bestowing favours while cancelling rights. According to its wording, "The State surrenders altogether to private persons the exploitation of rubber in the vacant lands belonging to it, for a period extending to the date at which Belgium may exercise the right to acquire the State which is assigned to it by the Convention of 3rd July, 1890," but with "exceptions and conditions" that went far to convert the boon into a mockery.* Yet, such as it was, it served as the basis of a compromise between the Congo Government and the companies it had tried to throw over; and, as M. Cattier points out, it was proposed to them, "for political reasons," as a *modus vivendi.* "This decree," M. Cattier explains, "divides into three zones the desmenial lands belonging to the State. In the first"—comprising nearly all the northern and central portions of its territory —"the State reserves to itself the exclusive exploitation of rubber. The territories included in this zone are called in the decree and in consequent regulations the *domaine privé*, of which, in reality, they constitute only a part. In order to avoid confusion and errors there is advantage in terming them *domaine privé strictu sensu.* The second

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1892), p. 307.

zone" — comprising most of the southern and eastern regions, which have since been largely transferred to the first zone, the latest addition being the Kasai region—" is reserved, and the decree provides that the exploitation of rubber will be there regulated when circumstances permit. The third zone"—chiefly limited to the small districts of Lower Congo and some of the river banks to the extent of fifty kilomètres—" is open to public exploitation, subject to two restrictions: rights already accorded to third parties, and published in the 'Bulletin Officiel' before the date of the decree, must be respected; and the Governor-General may grant to private individuals who establish factories or rubber-collecting agencies exclusive concessions for exploitation within not more than thirty kilomètres from their establishments."*

It will be noticed that this decree of 30th October, 1892, dealt only with rubber, which was then, and is still, the principal source of wealth in the Congo State. But ivory, already lessening in quantity and becoming more difficult and expensive to procure, was separately legislated for, and from the first all minerals were regarded as the property of the State.

Admitting that, without violation of the free trade provisions of the Berlin Act, "the Congo Government could not adopt any legislative measure or establish any *régime* conceding international monopolies or privileges," and that "all facilities accorded to its subjects in trade affairs ought to be extended to the subjects of other States," M. Cattier argued unconvincingly that "the Congo State can establish any commercial *régime* it thinks good, and no objection can be raised to its legislative and administrative action if the measures it takes are applicable, under like conditions and in the same manner, to traders of various nationalities, including those of Congolese nationality." The decree of 29th September, 1891, however, he regarded as "a violation of the rights of the natives," and he was

* Cattier, p. 306.

outspoken in his exposure of its dangers. "Its essential vice," he said, "is in placing the native population between the interests of the State and those of its agents, without rules precise and strict enough to protect them against the oppression of the agents." *

* Cattier, pp. 165, 171, 317.

CHAPTER VIII.

Anti-Slavery Crusading [1890-1894].

In self-defence, if not in fulfilment of pledges given by it to the Brussels Conference and clenched by the sanctioning of an import duty to defray the expenses of the crusade, it was incumbent on the Congo Government to do all in its power towards resisting the encroachments of the so-called Arab slave-raiders which had been constant and rapid since 1878.

The Congo State and the Arabs.

The enterprise that proved so profitable to Tipu-Tipu and his partners and rivals in procuring ivory from Central Africa and bribing or capturing natives—some to help in stealing it, others to carry it to the coast and, if they survived the journey, to be sold with it to the highest bidders—would probably have extended in any case; but it was certainly quickened by Congo State activity. As soon as Mr. Stanley had shown how easily the heart of the continent could be reached by way of the Congo, and what spoil was there waiting to be seized, the masters of the region adjacent to Lake Tanganyika hurried up to take possession before their instructors were ready for their own projected raidings. While the Brussels Conference was devising methods and laying down rules for its overthrow the slave trade was assuming unparalleled proportions, and the Congo Government was being convinced that unless it could speedily drive back the invaders from the east it would be in imminent danger of losing all the foothold it had gained, except, perhaps, in the small area between Stanley Pool and the mouth of the Congo. It was to avert this catastrophe that, apart from or in partnership with the admittedly commercial expeditions in the direction of Katanga and elsewhere, other expeditions, osten-

sibly philanthropic, but primarily political in their objects, and with a keen eye also for commercial advantages, were especially numerous in the few years following the virtual surrender of the whole Stanley Falls region to Tipu-Tipu under the arrangement made with him by Mr. Stanley.

The Société Anti-Esclavagiste.

The most honest of all the so-called philanthropic expeditions were those despatched by the Société Anti-Esclavagiste, with the object of setting up on the Tanganyika side "an insurmountable barrier to the caravans that came from the east to ravage the Manyema country, and returned to the coast laden with plunder and escorting lugubrious convoys of slaves." But the first party, sent out in 1890, and travelling by way of the Congo, got no further than the Lomani, where it was met and ignominiously driven back by the Arabs. The second was more successful. Led by Captain Jacques, who took the Zanzibar route, in October, 1891, it reached Lake Tanganyika, where it joined forces with Captain Joubert, a veteran disciple of Cardinal Lavigerie, who had been working with the Cardinal's White Fathers Mission since 1879.

Some good was doubtless done by these enthusiasts, although the few European priests, officers, and laymen, with their headquarters at Albertville and at Mrumbi, near by, both on the western shore of the lake, appear to have undertaken harder work than they could accomplish in controlling the natives whom they employed in patrolling the neighbourhood and in petty fights with others besides Arabs whenever occasion arose. Captain Stairs met them more than once on his way to Katanga, and considered that their influence was on the whole injurious, as they mainly provoked opposition that they could not crush. Of Captain Jacques, then proceeding to his destination, Dr. Moloney had to record that "his men seemed to be completely disorganised, and, instead of paying the natives, had looted every village on the road."

"Captain Joubert's most inveterate enemies were the emissaries of Rumaliza," Dr. Moloney also reported, Rumaliza being the Ujiji chieftain now rising into prominence as a leader of resistance to interference from the Congo State. "That sheikh had sworn to have Joubert's blood; and his slaves had for months been enlisting an army of *ruga-ruga* and other rapscallions to wipe him out." This was before Captain Jacques had arrived to take command of the "anti-slavery" army, augmented by his additions to about 200 Zanzibari and other indifferent warriors. In January, 1893, when matters had become far more serious, and before the arrival of two relief expeditions under Captain Long and Captain Descamps, Dr. Moloney added, "Whether reinforcements save the situation or not, the fact remains that they were left, for over a twelvemonth, face to face with a fanatical and unscrupulous foe, with little powder, and a stock of rifles which might have been furnished by the armoury of some provincial theatre. No more pertinent illustration could be devised of the folly, I had almost set down criminality, of founding empires 'on the cheap.'"*

The Welle and Aruwimi Expeditions.

Much costlier attempts at empire-founding, however, were then in progress. The operations of Captains Roget, Van Gèle, Van Kerckhoven, and others in the Welle and Aruwimi districts, dating from 1888, had for their immediate warrant the necessity of warding off the encroachments not only of Tipu-Tipu's followers, raiding north and west from Stanley Falls, but also of the followers of the Sudanese Mahdi, coming southward from Dongola. That even then the Congo Government aspired to such enlargement of territory as would open up to it the Nile valley was no secret, and was also a ground of alarm to the French; but excuse was found in the slave-raiding expeditions now plentiful, and threatening the natives already under the nominal care of the Congo Government.

* 'With Captain Stairs to Katanga,' pp. 46, 129, 133.

Captain Roget, having proceeded northwards from Basoko into the Niam-Niam country in February, 1890, established with Sultan Djabir, the most powerful chief there, relations similar to those by which Lieutenant von Wissmann had undermined the authority of Kalamba in the Baluba country, but with the important difference that the cannibal Niam-Niam were much more troublesome allies or vassals than the hemp-smoking Baluba. General Gordon had in 1876 enrolled fifty of them as soldiers, and had admired them as "thick-set and sturdy, as well as very fierce, brave and fearless"; but neither Captain Roget nor the other Belgian officers who followed in his steps succeeded in obtaining from the Niam-Niam leaders more than nominal submission, or any assistance that was not to their own advantage. The first of these leaders to follow Djabir's example was Sultan Bangaso, on the south side of the Ubangi, or Bomu, as it was called in that portion of its course, with whom Captain Van Gèle came to terms in August, 1890, and had the dealings with in guns and powder already referred to.* Another was Sultan Semio, on the north side of the river, who a few months later accepted the friendship of Roget's colleague, Lieutenant Milz. Though they called themselves sultans, there was, of course, no fellowship in blood or religion between the Niam-Niam potentates and the spurious Arabs whose lawless pursuits, with the help of Manyema and other dependents, they emulated.†

Extensions in Northern Congoland.

By this time the enterprise in northern Congoland, which had hitherto been fitful and at the whim of subordinates, had come to be organised under the command of Captain Van Kerckhoven, Captain Georges le Marinel's predecessor as commissary of the Bangala district. With

* *Ante*, p. 138.

† As in the previous chapter, it may be sufficient for me to refer generally to 'Le Mouvement Géographique' as the authority for concise statements of facts not otherwise vouched for.

a large force of native mercenaries, variously estimated at from one to five thousand, and probably chiefly recruited on the way and varying in numbers from time to time, many, if not all of them, being armed with Mauser rifles, Van Kerckhoven left Leopoldville on 4th February, 1891; and he was busily crusading in the country between the Welle and the Ubangi until his death on 10th August, 1892. "The conduct of the affairs of the Congo Free State," it was pointed out in the *Times*, "does not to an ordinary onlooker seem calculated to promote the objects for which it was professedly established, or even to promote its commercial development and bring an adequate revenue into the coffers of its Government." The Van Kerckhoven expedition, it was complained, had for eighteen months been raiding outside the then recognised limits of the State's territory, and there setting up "stations" and collecting "large stores of ivory," in defiance of French protests, and, at the time of writing, it was continuing its exploits within the British sphere of influence as marked out by the Anglo-German agreement. If, it was significantly added in this indictment, the Congo State's encroachments had been sanctioned by the Imperial British East African Company, still alive in 1892, the sanction had not been endorsed by the British Government.*

Van Kerckhoven's Ubangi Expedition.

Dividing his force into sections, entrusted to Captain Ponthier, Lieutenant Milz, and others, Captain Van Kerckhoven took as complete possession as he could of the long stretch of country scoured by him and his subordinates. This he did with the concurrence of Semio and the other native chiefs with whom a sort of friendship had already been sealed, Djabir being actually enrolled as a servant of the State and appointed to the rank of captain in its *force publique*. The consent of Rashid, Tipu-Tipu's

* *Times*, 20th September, 1892. The news of Van Kerckhoven's death had not then reached Europe.

nephew, was also obtained by a respectful visit that Van Kerckhoven paid to him at Stanley Falls, one alleged object of the expedition being the expulsion of the Arabs who had intruded into the Mambutu country. Much fighting had to be done, however, chiefly or ostensibly with the Arabs, who were defeated at Bomakandi, and thence pursued eastward with the help of Semio's cannibals as well as Djabir's. The Mambutu, instead of welcoming their avowed deliverers, were defiant. "Dervishes, Arabs, whites, men of Semio—all liars, thieves, and dogs," they shouted, with mocking cries of "Ponshio! Ponshio!" the native term for human flesh. "Strangers have always deceived us," declared one of the local chiefs, Sangebuno; "we have been the prey alike of Niam-Niam, Dervishes, and Arabs. Are the whites any better? No, surely. At any rate, as our country is now free from the presence of any foreigners, to admit fresh ones would be cowardice. I shall not let myself be the slave of any one. I shall fight against the whites." This rude patriot was worsted, however, and so were others. Some were easily disposed of; some caused grave embarrassment to the slowly advancing host, hampered by the unruliness and jealousies of the black majority of its own members nearly as much as by the resistance of its foes. It was only by setting against one another the tribes he sought to conquer, and, after or before one group had been overcome, by coaxing its rivals to take sides with him in the foolish hope of benefiting themselves thereby, that Van Kerckhoven traversed about twelve hundred miles in sixteen months. In June, 1892, he was at the junction of the Welle, there called the Kibali or Nzoro, with its tributary the Obi, and only some hundred and fifty miles to the west of Wadelai, when he found himself almost at the end of his resources. For two other months he appears to have made no progress, or only to have moved futilely to and fro, losing by disease or poisoned arrows most of the few survivors of the force he had started with, and deserted by many of those whose

services he had enlisted or whose help he had obtained on the way. At length, before 10th August, 1892, while preparing to resist an unexpected attack, he was struck down by a bullet from the Winchester his servant was loading for him. Lieutenant Milz, succeeding to the command of the expedition, went on to the Nile, and on 9th October reached Wadelai, which he found still occupied by a small residue of Emin Pasha's old garrison. There, or at Dufile, Lado and elsewhere, he left more than two-thirds of so much as remained of the Van Kerckhoven expedition, returning himself as quickly as he could, with fifty-six native warriors, to the seat of Congo government.

Though the expedition had done nothing to check Arab or any other slave-raiding, it had secured for the Congo State a title to the disputed territory up to the Ubangi on the north and along its whole eastward stretch towards the Nile, and, though there was as much concealment as was practicable, what were thought to be good grounds had been established for a claim to extension of the State's dominions over the western side of the Nile valley. "Every one," it was written in the *Times*, "must sympathise with and wish success to the Government of the Congo Free State in its efforts to develop the resources of its vast territory, to suppress the Arab slave-raiders that devastate the land, and to spread civilisation among the natives. But the sympathy must soon, in this country, cease if such filibustering expeditions are equipped to expend their energies in regions beyond the limits of the State, regions which are known to be within the sphere of a friendly Power. Notwithstanding the repeated assertions of ignorance on the part of the Free State, it is perfectly well known that Van Kerckhoven's expedition has been established at Lado for many months. This profession of ignorance is in itself sufficient to confirm the suspicion that the expedition from the first was intended to be of a secret nature, for the purpose of accomplishing an object which the Government of the State knew was illegitimate

and inconsistent with its friendly professions towards this country."*

It was fortunate for the Congo State that the alarm and suspicion raised by the proceedings of the Van Kerckhoven expedition in the north were quickly followed, and to some extent counteracted, by reports of the professedly beneficent achievements of the Dhanis expedition in the south, within the undisputed sphere of the State, and in apparent compliance with the philanthropic obligations assumed by it at the Brussels Conference.

Baron Dhanis's Arab Zone Expedition.

Lieutenant François Dhanis, who had been in the State's service since 1884 and had distinguished himself under Captain Roget in the Aruwimi district in 1889 and in the Kwango district in 1890, was still a young man when the command at Lusambo was transferred to him by Captain Paul le Marinel in April, 1892. Shortly after that date news arrived of a disturbance at Gandu on the Lomani, about midway between Lusambo and the headquarters of Tipu-Tipu and his son Sefu, at Kasongo and Nyangwe, on the Lualaba or Congo; M. Dhanis's tact in quelling this disturbance, and turning it to account as a prelude to the overthrow of Arab power in Congoland, made his fame, and saved the Congo State from wreckage.†

Gongo Lutete and the Batetela.

The immediate cause of the disturbance, Gongo Lutete, was a remarkable and, in some respects, a typical Central African warrior. "He was born at Malela, and was by blood a Bakusu," we are told by Dr. Hinde, who accompanied the Dhanis expedition both as a medical and as a military officer. "He had himself been a slave, having as a child fallen into the hands of the Arabs.

* *Times*, 13th April, 1893.

† 'Rapport de Baron Dhanis sur la Campagne Arabe dans le Manyèma' in 'Documents relatifs à la Répression de la Traite des Esclaves' (1895), Vol. I., pp. 19-42. I have followed this authoritative account, drawing supplementary matter from Dr. Hinde's 'Fall of the Congo Arabs' (1897). Dr. Hinde now holds important office in the British East Africa Protectorate.

While still a youth, as a reward for his distinguished conduct and pluck on raiding expeditions, he was given his freedom. Starting with one gun, at eighteen years of age, he gradually collected a band of brigands round him whom he ruled with a rod of iron, and before long he became Tipu-Tipu's chief slave and ivory-hunter. At this time"—when Dr. Hinde made his acquaintance in September, 1892—"he was perhaps thirty years of age. He was a well-built, intelligent-looking man of about 5 ft. 9 in. in height, with a brown skin, large brown eyes with very long lashes, a small mouth with thin lips, and a straight, comparatively narrow nose. One had to see this man on the warpath to realise the different aspects of his character. The calm, haughty chief, or the genial and friendly companion, became on the battlefield an enthusiastic individual, with a highly nervous organisation, who dealt out his orders, one after another, without a moment's hesitation. He was capable of sustaining intense fatigue, and could lead his warriors through the country at a run for hours together." "The band of brigands with which Gongo had surrounded himself," according to Dr. Hinde, "were mostly of the Batetela race. These Batetela, and more particularly one tribe called the Bakusu, are, as far as I could ascertain from making inquiries in every direction, the most inveterate cannibals."* Their headquarters were at Gandu.

Gongo Lutete's raidings had brought him into conflict with the Congo State garrisons, and he had been driven back by Captain Descamps, the officer then in charge of Stanley Falls, before his more severe defeat by Lieutenant Dhanis on 9th May, 1892, which, two months later, was followed by his proposal to enter the service of the State, "since the Arabs for some time past had paid him neither for his work nor for the ivory he sent them." This proposal

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' pp. 86, 89. The apparently confusing recurrence of "tete" in "Batetela" and "Lutete" illustrates the formation of names in Bantu languages. They might be more correctly written "ba-Tete-la" and "lu-Tete," meaning, roughly, "the Tete people" and "the Tete chief."

was welcome, as the killing of Hodister and his companions at Riba Riba on 15th May, the arrest and imprisonment of two Belgian officers by Sefu at Kasongo, the critical position of Captains Jacques and Joubert near Lake Tanganyika, and much else, had rendered it necessary that steps should be promptly taken for the conquest of all the east as well as all the south of Congoland.

Dhanis's Advance on the Arabs.

With the help of Gongo and his thousands of Batetela and other cannibals, as well as of the reinforcements of less irregular troops sent up from Leopoldville, M. Dhanis—now Captain, soon to be Major, and in due course Baron—was able to make a formidable advance against the Arab and Manyema forces under Sefu, Tipu's chief representative in this region. It was made with all the more alacrity as on 22nd October Dr. Hinde, who had been sent to Gandu to complete the terms of alliance with Gongo, received warning that Sefu, with 10,000 men armed with guns and swords, had marched out from Kasongo to attack him. "The letter," as Dr. Hinde reported, "went on to say that Sefu's plan was, after killing us, to take all the country as far as Leopoldville, and that the only thing to save us and propitiate Sefu would be either to give up our friend Gongo Lutete, or else to send his head as a present, and then depart out of the country, which Sefu maintained was his. Unless these two conditions were immediately complied with Sefu would cross the Lomani and fight us. We wrote a temporising letter and, as soon as the carriers had started, broke camp and followed them, hoping to reach the river before the Arab forces succeeded in crossing, as our only chance of checking their advance." *

Sefu was dilatory in his movements, however, and there was no fighting before Captain Dhanis came up, with a Krupp gun, to take command of an army comprising, besides 350 of the Congo State's *force publique*, under four or five white officers, some 3,400 Batetela auxiliaries, sent

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' p. 97.

up by Gongo and two subordinate chiefs, on whom most of the actual work devolved. The first battle was fought and won on 22nd November, on the western bank of the Lomani, when about 1,000 prisoners were said to have been taken, and nearly as many killed, the prisoners being only removed for consumption after those slain on the battle-field had been disposed of. Four days later the river was crossed by the advance guard, with Dr. Hinde, who was surprised by the refinements which Arab encroachments had introduced, and which was to be replaced by savagery at its worst under Congo State sanction. "We rushed a fortified village named Chile," he reported, "the most tastefully built and beautifully planted town I have seen in Central Africa. The houses were built on platforms raised about two feet from the ground, and were made of wood, thatched with the ordinary grass. On the inside the walls were plastered with white clay, grotesquely ornamented in yellow, black, and red. Nearly all these houses were furnished with regular-made fireplaces and seats." "It was here," he added, "that the cannibal propensities of friendlies and camp followers were first brought before me. On returning through the town, after following the inhabitants a mile or two beyond, I found that the killed and wounded had all disappeared, and some of my men volunteered the information that the friendlies had cut them up and carried them off for food. This I did not believe. On the way home, however, we were again attacked. The friendlies, who were dancing along in front, promptly broke and fled, leaving amongst the loot scattered about the road several human arms, legs, and heads, which the men whose information I doubted took care to point out to me as proof that they had not lied." *

At Lusuna, about fifty miles from Nyangwe, on 11th December, Captain Dhanis met Gongo Lutete with Captain Michaux, who had been told off to escort him and the bulk of his followers coming direct from Gandu. The combined

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' pp. 117, 118.

force of the invaders then numbered about 400 of the *force publique* and about 25,000 Batetela, including their wives, of whom Gongo's share was 300, the allowance of his 1,500 more regular troops being 2,800, and the 4,000 humbler followers having only 400 amongst them.* "The fact that both sides were cannibals, or rather that both sides had cannibals in their train," Dr. Hinde considered, "proved a great element in our success. The teaching of the Mohammedan religion does not allow that a man whose body has been mutilated can enter into the highest heaven, where only perfect men are admitted. As a consequence of this belief the white Arabs and other faithful followers of Islam would, after a rebuff, instead of trying to retrieve the fortunes of the day, fly from the field with all possible speed, not so much in order to save their lives as through fear lest their carcases, in the event of their falling, should be torn to pieces."† One of the grim episodes of the march—incident to a tough fight on 30th December with Muni Mohara, the Manyema chief, who was Sefu's principal ally, and 2,000 of his followers—may be quoted from Dr. Hinde's record. "I saw on this battlefield the only case I can remember of a native putting love before fear or danger. On a bare spot my comrades had just swept over I passed a woman seated on the ground by a dead chief, quietly crying, with his head in her lap, while the bullets whizzed round her, sometimes only missing her by inches. A little later on, when recrossing the battlefield, the only signs left were bloodstained spots here and there, marking the place where the victims of the fight had been cut up to furnish a banquet in the evening to the victorious survivors. The camp followers and friendlies made no difference in this respect between the killed and wounded on their own side or the enemy's. One of Gongo Lutete's

* According to Baron Dhanis (p. 19), Gongo's personal following of 9,000 was thus made up. The balance of 16,000 consisted apparently in part of the forces of his subordinate chiefs and in part of a hungry rabble picked up on the march.

† 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' p. 124.

wives was killed during the progress of the battle and was cut up and eaten by his own men, on whom, however, he took summary vengeance the day following by handing them over to form a repast for their comrades." *

The Capture of Nyangwe.

The fifty miles' march to the Lualaba lasted five weeks, as there were many Manyema villages to be destroyed, and their occupants eaten; and Captain Dhanis appears to have done little more through another five weeks than watch the Arab stronghold from the opposite side of the Lualaba, which was there about 1,000 yards wide. The delay was probably wise, as in his suspense Sefu took fright and withdrew with part of his force, while Gongo's Batetela desolated the neighbourhood. The river was at length crossed on 4th March, 1893, and to every one's astonishment Nyangwe was entered without protest, and occupied almost without bloodshed, although on the 9th there was what was called "an outbreak of treachery," followed by plentiful slaughter of the defeated and burning down of most of the town by Dhanis's orders. "For three days," wrote Dr. Hinde, "we saw nothing of Lutete, and I learned afterwards, when talking over affairs with him, that during this time he had not left his own quarters; the sights in his camp were so appalling that even he did not care to put himself in the way of seeing them unnecessarily. He told us that every one of the cannibals who accompanied him had at least one body to eat. All the meat was cooked and smoke-dried, and formed provisions for the whole of his force and for all the camp followers for many days afterwards. A volunteer drummer who had been with us for some time disappeared, and, we imagined, had been killed. A day or two afterwards he was discovered dead in a hut by the side of a half-consumed corpse; he had apparently over-eaten himself and had died in consequence."† Yet on the whole Dr. Hinde thought well of the hygienic effects of cannibalism. "During the war in

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' p. 134. † *Ibid.*, p. 175.

which we were engaged for two years," he said, "we reaped perhaps the only advantages that could be claimed for this disgusting custom. In the night following a battle or the storming of a town these human wolves disposed of all the dead, leaving nothing even for the jackals, and thus saved us, no doubt, from many an epidemic."*

The Capture of Kasongo.

Kasongo, in which Sefu was residing, was next attacked, and on 22nd April it was taken as easily as Nyangwe, Sefu and most of his following having retired to join forces with Rumaliza, the great potentate of Ujiji, who was at Kabambare, midway between Kasongo and Lake Tanganyika. "Kasongo," Dr. Hinde reported, "was a much finer town than even the grand old slave capital, Nyangwe. During the siege of Nyangwe, the taking of which was more or less expected, the inhabitants had time to carry off all valuables, and even furniture, to places of safety. At Kasongo it was different. We rushed into the town so suddenly that everything was left *in situ*. Our whole force found new outfits, and even the common soldiers slept on silk and satin mattresses, in carved beds with silk mosquito curtains. The room I took possession of was eighty feet long by fifteen feet wide, with a door leading into an orange garden, beyond which was a view extending over five miles. Here we found many European luxuries, the use of which we had almost forgotten: candles, sugar, matches, silver and glass goblets, and decanters were in profusion. We also took about twenty-five tons of ivory, ten or eleven tons of powder, millions of caps, cartridges for every kind of rifle, gun, and revolver perhaps ever made, some shells, and a German flag, taken by the Arabs in German East Africa. The granaries throughout the town were stocked with enormous quantities of rice, coffee, maize, and other food; the gardens were luxurious and well planted, and oranges, both sweet and bitter, guava, pomegranates, pineapples, and bananas abounded at every

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' p. 69.

turn." "During the time spent at Kasongo," he added, "I was constantly astonished by the splendid work which had been done in the neighbourhood by the Arabs. Kasongo was built in the corner of a virgin forest, and for miles round all the brushwood and the great majority of trees had been cleared away. In the forest-clearing splendid crops of sugar-cane, rice, maize, and fruits grew; and some idea of the extent of this cultivation may be gathered from the fact that I have ridden through a single ricefield for an hour and a half. When placing groups of people about this country to form villages, these villages became self-supporting within three or four months."*

This testimony is important as showing that, appalling as was the mischief wrought by the Arabs in raiding for ivory and slaves, they introduced among those natives whom they did not steal or kill a measure of civilisation far in advance of anything attained by the natives for themselves, and far more generous and serviceable than that afterwards forced upon them by the Congo State officials. "The political geography of the Upper Congo Basin has been completely changed, as a result of the Belgian campaign among the Arabs," Dr. Hinde admitted in March, 1895. "It used to be a common saying in this part of Africa that all roads led to Nyangwe. This town, until lately one of the greatest markets in Africa, has ceased to exist, and its site, when I last saw it, was occupied by a single house. Kasongo, a more recent though still larger centre, with perhaps 60,000 inhabitants, has also been swept away, and is now represented by a station of the Free State nine miles away, on the river bank. Despite their slave-raiding propensities during the forty years of their domination, the Arabs had converted the Manyema and Malela country into one of the most prosperous in Central Africa."†

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' pp. 183, 187.

† *Ibid.* p. 6, citing 'Three Years' Travel in Central Africa,' a paper read by him before the Royal Geographical Society.

The Re-Enslavement of the Manyema.

Having driven Sefu from his strongholds with unlooked for ease, Captain Dhanis occupied more than half a year in appropriating the district and its population for the profit of the Congo State. "While arranging the country after having settled down at Kasongo," Dr. Hinde reported, "we found it advisable to make use of those native and Arab slaves who were capable of teaching the others. All the masons, brickmakers, agriculturists, carpenters, armourers, and ironworkers found among the prisoners were given charge of the intelligent lads from the native tribes, and set to work, with the intention of eventually forming colonies in suitable districts for these trades. We even employed their elephant-hunters, who had been taken fighting, and left them their arms on condition that they hunted for us, and taught every one who chose to go with them what to do." In other words, and without euphemism, the old slavery was continued and strengthened under new masters. "Enormous numbers of people," we are assured, "considered themselves our slaves, and, since the Arabs had been turned out, were like sheep without a shepherd. We selected the petty chiefs who still existed—and, in cases where the chiefs had been killed, made new ones—and these, in turn, selected their own people. One of us then marched this party out into the surrounding country, and, choosing a convenient place for them, gave them orders that they should build a village and start planting." But the experiment appears to have been generally unsuccessful. It was so, at any rate, as regards Dr. Hinde's share in the work. "Two or three times I established villages," he said, "with invariably the same result; the whole population decamped, and either took up their abode elsewhere or arrived in Kasongo, clamouring to be placed in some other district." The Congo State's deliverance of the natives from Arab thraldom was not welcomed, and more unwelcome than its regular officials and troops were, with good reason, its

cannibal allies. "We were at this time," wrote Dr. Hinde, by way of illustration, "having a good deal of trouble with the natives to the westward of the neighbourhood of Kasongo, who had been attacking our friendlies, and even our own people, whenever they went out to look for food."*

It was evidently to legalise and systematise the new tyranny which Captain Dhanis was establishing that a Royal Decree was issued on 28th November, 1893, announcing that "the Commandant of the forces of the State is authorised to raise in the country, by means of *prestations*, part of the resources necessary to cover the extraordinary expenses incurred in suppressing the Arab revolt. He determines the nature and the amount of the *prestations* to be furnished by each locality or native chief. These *prestations* will be, as far as possible, in proportion to the population placed under the authority of the local chief. *Prestations* of labour will be used in the establishment of plantations, the cultivation of the rubber plant, and the construction of works of public utility."† These *prestations*, or levies, were henceforth the rule and authority for every sort of oppression and extortion in other parts of the State's dominions as well as in the Manyema country.

The Betrayal of Gongo.

In September an exceptionally disgraceful incident occurred. Trouble having broken out between the Basuku and Lieutenant Duchesne, who had been left in charge at Gandu, Gongo Lutete was at the end of August sent home "to arrange matters," and Dr. Hinde volunteered to follow him, but unfortunately not soon enough. Before Dr. Hinde started news came that Duchesne "had discovered that Gongo was a traitor," and had made him a prisoner, and when Dr. Hinde arrived, with a small escort, on 17th September, it was to find that "our brave and faithful ally had been shot forty-eight hours before our arrival." The murder, under cover of a sham court martial,

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' pp. 194, 196, 203, 204.

† 'Bulletin Officiel' (1893), p. 246.

appears to have been as foolish as it was wicked. Gongo, whatever his faults as the savage leader of a cannibal horde, had been in every way loyal to Dhanis and the Congo State, had secured for the expedition most of its success up to the time of his death, and had done all he could to restrain the worst tastes of his followers. "When, after the court martial, poor Gongo was told that he would be shot the following morning at eight o'clock, he appointed his son Lupungu his successor and, when left in his cell, hanged himself with a rope plaited from part of his clothing, to avoid the disgrace of a public execution. Unfortunately he was discovered before life was extinct, was cut down and resuscitated, and, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, marched out and shot." A few hours after his death the natives far and near, "by means of the drum-telegraph, all knew of what had taken place at Gandu, and, as their great chief was dead, considered themselves at liberty to eat all his personal followers." Before Dr. Hinde's arrival "the whole population of Gandu and the surrounding districts, deprived as they were of their head, had split up into factions, which were fighting amongst each other, raiding each other's quarters, and murdering whoever they came across." Before returning to Kasongo, with as many of Gongo's followers as he could collect, only about 1,000, Dr. Hinde had "perhaps the hardest worked month he had known during the expedition" in re-establishing some sort of order.*

The Downfall of Arab Power.

Harder work followed. Though the murder of Gongo alarmed natives who might otherwise have been friendly, and was the cause of years of disaster, it encouraged the Arabs to activity that hastened their overthrow.

Several movements had been conducing to this end, the most important contributory being the defeat of Rashid, Tipu's nephew and Sefu's cousin, who, earlier in the year, had only been prevented from destroying the small Belgian

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' pp. 206-13.

garrison at Stanley Falls by the timely arrival of Captain Chaltin, on his way from Basoko with reinforcements for Captain Dhanis. Rashid's army was driven back with great slaughter on 18th May, and there was frequent fighting with more heavy slaughter after Captain Ponthier had brought up further reinforcements on 25th June. Pushing their way down to Kasongo—Chaltin, by way of the Lomani, and Ponthier, by way of the Lualaba—these officers found Dhanis preparing for a desperate encounter with Rumaliza, who on 13th October left Kabambare in the hope of crushing the invaders. With all the forces he could muster, including 200 men hurriedly brought from Bangala by Captain Lothaire, Dhanis went out to meet the enemy, and there was intermittent fighting from 15th October till 14th January, 1894. Then the accidental blowing up of a powder store in Rumaliza's principal boma, or fortified encampment, caused such panic that, though he himself escaped, more than 2,000 of his army were forced to capitulate three days later, as they were famishing through lack of water. Other thousands had been killed during the three months' struggle, and the occupation of Kabambare on 25th January, followed by the scouring of the whole country as far as Lake Tanganyika and in the direction of Stanley Falls, in which Captain Lothaire notably distinguished himself, and in which Rashid and other leaders were taken prisoners, virtually brought to a conclusion the long campaign against the Arabs.

Baron Dhanis, as he now was, the title having been conferred on him in October, 1893, claimed in his official report, dated 20th December, 1894, that his long, laborious, and in every way remarkable campaign had avenged the wrong inflicted upon Europeans and natives by Arab intruders, and had rescued for the Congo State the territory it was entitled to. "The annihilation of the Arab power," he said, "has brought about the complete suppression of the devastating bands which, in order to procure slaves,

had been ravaging the country with fire and sword, from the Welle in the north down to the Sankuru in the south. With them the slave trade disappears from the regions they exploited, and very soon, we may hope, it will no longer exist in the Congo State. The native chiefs who have submitted have been reinstated in authority; others who have disappeared have been replaced by intelligent soldiers of the State; and some of the Arabs, who made their submission, have been left in enjoyment of their possessions. All have been disarmed and warned that their authority must be exercised under the direction of the State's agents, who are charged with the pacific settlement of any differences that may arise."*

The concluding sentences of this report are especially noteworthy as revealing the military policy henceforth to be pursued. "Large camps will be formed at Kasongo and Kabambare, and the numerous soldiers instructed there will form the nucleus of the national army. From this point of view the Arab campaign has forcibly shown that the natives of the various districts of the Congo are in no way inferior as soldiers to the blacks of the coast who are most famous for their bravery. The Baluba and others trained and led by Lieutenant Doorme, the Bangala under Captain Lothaire, &c., have been admirable. Captain Lothaire speaks very highly of them in his reports. In the near future we may expect that it will be no longer necessary to recruit soldiers abroad at great expense. The country will mainly supply its own requirements and the Manyema will be of great importance, alike from the number of men they can furnish and from the special aptitude of these men to the profession of arms."

More pompous was the report of M. Van Eetvelde to King Leopold, dated 24th December, in which the Secretary of State for the Congo took credit for the brilliant and complete fulfilment by his Government

* 'Documents relatifs à la Répression de la Traite des Esclaves' (1895), Vol. I., p. 41.

and its agents of all the duties laid upon them by the Brussels Conference. "The task," he said, "is not over, but what remains of it will be comparatively easy and its accomplishment will be in harmony with measures having for their object the formation of a national army and the consequent reduction of public expenditure." *

In the eight years that have since elapsed the task taken upon itself by the Congo Government has proved to be more than ever at variance with the duties imposed by the Brussels as well as by the Berlin Conference; and the economies expected to result from the formation of a national army of cannibals and slave-raiders have been wasteful in many ways.

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1895), pp. 100-19.

CHAPTER IX.

International Complications [1894-1895].

The uneasiness and annoyance caused in England, France, and Germany by the Congo State's crusading in the east and north, under cover of the obligations assumed by it as regards suppression of the slave trade, continued and showed themselves in frequent complaints which were scarcely allayed by diplomatic arrangements entered into in 1894.

German Complaints.

Germany's only ground of complaint for some time was the hindrance thus raised, in defiance of the free trade provisions of the Berlin General Act, to the trade with Central Africa which enterprising Germans were anxious to develope by way of Zanzibar and the adjacent coast. This brought them into commercial relations with Tipu-Tipu and other Arab fighting merchants, against which the Congo Government protested, and which it would have had better right to denounce had its own policy been more honest. Tipu, though formally a servant of the Congo State, was not fettered in any way as to disposal of the ivory procured on the eastern side of Stanley Falls, and sent to market by him or by his agents. If, moreover, some German traders were unscrupulous in selling guns and gunpowder to the ivory-collectors and slave-raiders, in defiance of the provisions of the Brussels General Act, the Congo State was at least as unscrupulous in its distribution of like materials of destruction among the murderous savages in its employ. The ill-feeling thus provoked on both sides was, therefore, of a sort that neither party could give vent to in more than undignified quarrelling. German East Africa, as recognised by the other European Powers, and roughly marked out by the Anglo-German Agreements of 1886 and 1890, was

not encroached upon by the Congo State, and German operations outside of it came to an end when Major von Wissmann retired from the State's service.

French and British Complaints.

Both Great Britain and France were, as regards Congo developments, in different case. France has never abandoned the hope of acquiring dominion over nearly the whole of North Africa, and the earlier arrangements with King Leopold offered to France a prospect of also succeeding to all his gains. Great Britain, however, as custodian of Egypt, claimed priority of control over the entire region, west of the Nile and north of Congoland, known as the Egyptian Sudan. The north-westernmost portions of British East Africa were actually within the Conventional Basin of the Congo, and there can be small doubt that the transfer of Uganda from the administration of the British East Africa Company to that of the British Crown, early in 1893, was hastened by the apparent necessity for prompt measures being taken to hold the Congo State at bay, as well as to assist the Anglo-Egyptian advances against the followers of the Dongola Mahdi which were then in contemplation.

The Anglo-Congolese Convention of 1894.

It was with a view of harmonising the interests of Great Britain with those of the Congo State that, after more than a year's corresponding on the subject, a very unfortunate compromise was arrived at on 12th May, 1894. By a Convention then signed by the representatives of the two Governments Great Britain made some important concessions in return for the lease, during the lifetime of King Leopold, of a strip of Congo territory, twenty-five kilomètres or about sixteen miles broad, "extending from the most northern port of Lake Tanganyika as far as the most southern point of Lake Albert Edward," and for permission to construct across Congo State territory a telegraph line connecting British South Africa with the Nile valley. Besides delimiting the frontiers between the Congo State

and the British sphere north of the Zambezi, on terms generous to the former, the Convention provided that "the sphere of influence of the Congo State to the north of the German sphere in East Africa shall be limited by a frontier following the 30th meridian east of Greenwich up to its intersection with the crest of the water-parting between the Nile and the Congo, and that crest of the parting in a northerly and north-westerly direction." More than that, Great Britain leased to King Leopold, part for his lifetime and part in perpetuity for the Congo State, the territories west of Lake Albert and the Nile from Maagi up to the frontier just mentioned, including Fashoda, and extending to 25° E. longitude and its intersection with 10° N. latitude.*

This agreement, on being published, gave great offence both to France and to Germany. The German Government protested so strongly against the article putting Great Britain in possession of the strip of land between Lakes Tanganyika and Albert Edward, adjacent to German East Africa, and manifestly intended for the Cape-to-Cairo railway already being schemed by Mr. Cecil Rhodes, that it had to be withdrawn by arrangement between the British and Congo Governments on 22nd June, 1894. The expostulations of the French Government against the proposed handing over to the Congo State of nearly the whole province of Bahr-el-Ghazal, and more than that, resulted in a Convention between it and the Congo Government which was in reality to the benefit of both parties and prejudicial only to British interests.

The Franco-Congolese Convention of 1894.

The Convention with France, dated 14th August, provided that the frontier between it and the Congo State in the east should henceforth be the Ubangi, from its junction with the Congo, and the Bomu, as it is called above the junction with it of the Welle, and thence further east, in a convenient line, on to 30° E. longitude. From that point the British proposal was so far agreed to as to

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1884), p. 249.

allow of the territory up to 5°·30 N. latitude, instead of 10°, being held by the State.* The State's claim to the country over which Captain Van Kerckhoven and other Belgians had been crusading was thus assented to by France, as well as the lease to it of the portion of the Nile valley commonly called the Lado *enclave*, or "le territoire pris à bail." The rest of the Egyptian Sudan, including most of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, remained debatable land, open to French exploitation unless Great Britain's title to it, as the protector of Egypt, was recognised. To the Congo State, however, were assigned quite as much territory outside the Conventional Basin of the Congo, and quite as much opporunity for meddling in the political and commercial affairs of the Nile valley, as could on any ground be expected to be profitable to it or to its Sovereign.

Whatever excuses may be found for the singularly ill-advised Convention of 12th May between Great Britain and the Congo State, the recklessness shown in the continuance of its unnecessary and mischievous surrenders to the State, after abandonment of the only hypothetical advantages proposed in it for Great Britain, is inexplicable. The British Government was promptly rewarded for its generosity by the State's assistance to the French advances towards the Nile valley which culminated in the "Fashoda incident," with Captain Marchand for its hero; and subsequent betrayals of misplaced friendship have been in keeping with that procedure.

The administrators of the Congo State, for all that, deserve credit for the remarkable ability shown in their conduct of this business, and of other business no less intricate and urgent on later as well as earlier occasions.

The Congo State's Insolvency.

Notwithstanding the support given by the Belgian Government to the State in sanctioning and, in effect, making itself responsible for the loan of 150,000,000 francs raised in 1887, in lending next year 10,000,000 francs to

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1884), p. 254.

be spent on the Lower Congo railway, and also in undertaking in 1890 to advance to it 25,000,000 francs in the course of ten years, the State was in 1894 and 1895 in dire financial straits, owing to the costliness of its railway and of its numberless enterprises further inland. Such statements as that King Leopold was "no longer in a position to continue his sacrifices for the State" were freely, if not officially, made in the Belgian journals, and in one it was announced in January, 1894, that, as a desperate means of staving off bankruptcy, "a party of speculators led by Colonel North had offered a sum that more than covered the debt for the purchase of the sole privilege of establishing their operations in the vast and rich province of the Manyema," and that a Société du Manyéma had been organised with this object.* It was added, however, that the transaction had been forbidden by the Belgian Government on the ground that, under King Leopold's will of July, 1889, the Manyema district, as part of the Congo State's property, was a national asset, the mortgaging of which could not be allowed. The Congo Government and the privileged companies in which it was the predominant partner had therefore to struggle on as best they could while the territorial conventions with Great Britain and France were being negotiated and manipulated, and after. A loan of 6,500,000 francs illegally obtained on 31st March, 1894, from M. Browne de Tiège, representing a syndicate of Antwerp financiers, only met the most pressing necessities of the railway, and it was notorious that visits paid by King Leopold himself to Paris, and other financial centres, had for their aim the procuring of funds, and obtained inadequate response.

So grave had the situation become that, in compliance with an appeal from King Leopold, the Belgian Government on 9th January, 1895, entered into a treaty with him, "subject to the approval of the Legislature," to at

* *Le Précurseur* of Antwerp, 7th January, 1894, quoted in the *Times* of 10th January.

Help from the Belgian Government.

once, or at an early date to be "determined by Royal decree," take over the Congo State, with all its possessions, claims, and obligations, as from the preceding 1st January, instead of waiting for the ten years proposed by the Convention of 2nd July, 1890.

This treaty was a dead letter, as the approval of the Belgian Legislature was not obtained. Submitted to the Chamber of Representatives, along with a comprehensive "exposé des motifs" and a "projet de loi," it was referred to a Special Commission which, on 24th May, reported against its adoption, and the decision was in accordance with the weight of public opinion, as expressed in Clerical as well as in Radical and Socialist newspapers, which, viewing the question from different points of view, agreed in deprecating—at any rate, without careful consideration and ample safeguards—the taking over by so small a nation as Belgium of financial, colonial, and internationa responsibilities so onerous and complicated as the Congo State had incurred. As a compromise, therefore, it was decided on 27th June, after prolonged discussions—and a law was passed to this effect on 29th June—that, the question of annexation being indefinitely postponed, two additional loans should be granted, one of 6,850,000 francs to the Congo State, to enable it to repay with interest the amount improperly obtained from M. Browne de Tiège's syndicate, and one of 5,000,000 francs to the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer, in addition to the 10,000,000 francs already handed to it.*

Arrangements with the French Government.

Before that another step had been taken in the hope of clearing up the difficulties consequent on King Leopold's having in April, 1884, assigned to France a right of pre-emption as regards his Congo possessions. The right had been to some extent waived by subsequent arrangements; but enough of it remained

* Wauters, pp. 103-105, 361; Cattier, p. 122.

to warrant the French objections offered to the State's abortive treaty of 9th January, 1895, with Belgium. With a view to removing these objections an important Convention between France and Belgium was drawn up and signed on 5th February. "The Belgian Government," it was here declared, "recognises the right of preference possessed by France over its Congolese possessions in case of their compulsory alienation, wholly or in part. In order to give effect to this right of preference, any exchange of Congolese territories with a foreign Power, and every concession or assignment, wholly or in part, of the said territories to a foreign State or to a foreign company endowed with sovereign rights, will consequently be the subject of prior negotiation between the Governments of Belgium and the French Republic. The Belgian Government declares that it will never gratuitously part with the whole or any part of these possessions, and the arrangements here made apply to all the territories of Belgian Congo."*

As the Convention creating a Belgian Congoland fell through, this Franco-Belgian Convention has no technical force. "From a moral point of view," however, as M. Cattier points out, "it will be impossible for France to repudiate the interpretation to which it is pledged by it."† It remains to be seen whether the Sovereign of the Congo State considers himself equally bound by moral obligations.

* Cattier, p. 81. † *Ibid.*, p. 82.

CHAPTER X.

Administrative Abuses [1894-1897].

Although the machinery of government in the Congo was for the most part constituted and set working as soon as possible after the State's establishment in 1884, with M. Van Eetvelde as King Leopold's principal and very able adviser and agent, additions and alterations had of course to be made in later years, as necessity or expediency called for them. Most of these were incident to the administration—and partly, perhaps, due to the suggestions—of M. Wahis, who succeeded M. Janssen as Governor-General in 1892, and who, his place being taken by deputies during his temporary absences in Europe, has held the office ever since.

The State and its Servants.

An ordinance of exceptional importance was issued on 10th October, 1894, defining and regulating the duties of all officials appointed by the Secretary of State or the Governor-General.* Such appointments were, as a rule, to be for three years, during which time the holders were to devote themselves exclusively to the service of the State, to engage in no sort of trade, to receive no payments or rewards of any description from merchants or private individuals, and "not to communicate to outsiders or to publish, without special permission, any information as to affairs of State or private concerns with which their official functions may make them acquainted"; appeal being made to their honour as regards professional secrecy after retirement from positions in which, while holding them, they could have been severely punished for breach of discipline.†

The chief value of this last rule is in the excuse it affords for refusing to take account of any discreditable facts

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1894), pp. 221-236. † *Ibid.*, p. 224.

disclosed by retired servants of the State. There are no records showing anything that may have been done towards enforcement of the other rules, and it is significant that the ordinance fixed no salaries. The arrangement made with each official is at the pleasure of the Secretary of State; and it is notorious that the regular salaries are generally contemptible in amount, and that, if care is taken to prevent the bribing of officials by outsiders, the State's own policy of "premiums" is systematic. "The blameworthy custom established itself," says M. Cattier, "of allotting to certain functionaries of the territorial administration premiums proportionate to the value of the ivory and rubber collected by them, whether in the management of the private domain of the State or in the procuring of payments in kind by natives in the way of taxes. This placed the functionaries in the painful situation of having to sacrifice their pecuniary interests at the bidding of their conscience. It incited them, by the stimulus of self-interest, to severity and harshness in the performance of their duties. On its giving rise to most well-grounded recriminations, this rule was abolished in appearance, but it has been re-established in another form. As long as it lasts it will expose the administration of the State to suspicions often undeserved."*

Chefferies and Prestations.

The cruelties to natives, as well as other offences, to which the arrangement lent itself at the hands of unscrupulous officials are manifest; and everything tended to facilitate them. On 6th October, 1891, a decree had been issued, establishing what were called *chefferies*, and providing for the recognition and investiture of native chiefs as accredited agents of the State. "For each investiture," it was appointed, "there shall be prepared a list, indicating the name of the village and its exact locality, the names of the headmen, the number of huts, and the total of the

* Cattier, p. 235. In support of his grave allegation, M. Cattier refers to the revelations in the Lothaire-Stokes case.

population—men, women, and children. A list shall also be prepared by the District Commissary, showing the annual *prestations* to be furnished for each village in produce —in maize, sorghum, palm-oil, ground-nuts, &c—also in *corvées*, labourers, or soldiers. This list shall indicate the lands that are to lie fallow, and the nature of the cultivation and all other public works to be carried on. The native chiefs will exercise their authority according to their usages and customs, provided these are not contrary to public order and are in conformity with the laws of the State. They will be under the direction and oversight of the district commissaries."* Thus, with a nickel medal and chain to attest his dignity,† every native chief or aspirant to chieftainship who could be controlled was converted into a vassal, bound to obey State orders in using all the appliances of savagery for the benefit of his masters. Among the "possible dangers" of the arrangement pointed out by M. Cattier were "the discontent of populations consequent on investitures disapproved by them, the enhanced power conferred on unstable chiefs, the irritation caused by the intervention of young and imprudent agents in the invested chiefs' exercise of their rights, and the disaffection incident to too heavy *prestations*."‡

The *prestations* appear, at starting, to have been comparatively light, and the *chefferies* to have been few in number; but the operation of the new decree was widespread and ever more and more tyrannical after the new companies for developing the State's private domain had been organised, and while the conquest of that domain was being partially effected by countless military expeditions in the north, south, and east. They were alike serviceable in providing forced labour for the collection of rubber and other commodities and in obtaining recruits and auxiliaries for the *force publique*.

This *force publique* had been further reorganised by a

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1891), pp. 259-261. † *Ibid.* (1892), p. 20.
‡ Cattier, p. 228.

decree dated 1st October, 1893, before the close of Baron Dhanis's anti-Arab crusade, when it was divided into sixteen companies ; one, chiefly for training and staff purposes, being at Boma, and the seven of most importance being two in the Welle district and two in the Ubangi district, both in the north, and three in the Stanley Falls district, or Arab Zone, stretching down to the south and including all the Manyema country.* The effective strength appointed for 1894 was 4,520, exclusive of the native auxiliaries fitfully supplied, in as many thousands as might be wanted, by great chiefs like the murdered Gongo Lutete, and by the minor *chefferies*, all the arrangements for which were under the private control of the Governor-General. Of the 4,520 "regulars" it was ordered that 3,550 should be fresh recruits, of whom 1,480, drawn from the Ubangi and Welle districts, were for the most part apparently Bangala and kindred cannibals, and 700 were Batetela and Manyema, also cannibals, as were also, in large proportion, 450 from the Équateur and Kasai districts and 250 from the Lualaba. The remaining 670 were to be recruited in the western districts, and many of the balance of 970 already in the force were doubtless Hausas, Senegalis, and others still left from the West Africans originally employed or more recently enlisted.† By 1896 the acknowledged strength of the *force publique* had nearly doubled, amounting to 8,500,‡ and in the past six years it has again nearly doubled. The regular establishment in 1902 is understood to have numbered 15,000, and the aggregate of auxiliaries to have been some 10,000, if not more.

The Force Publique.

If we may assume that the Congo Government was really honest and in earnest as regards its plans for carrying out the pledges given by it to the Berlin and Brussels Conferences, generous allowance must

The Culpability of the State for Congo Cruelties.

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1894), p. 3. † *Ibid* (1894), p. 5.
‡ *Ibid* (1896), p. 124.

be made for the blunders and failures inevitably incident to the stupendous attempt at "civilising," and rescuing from their own savagery and the wrong-doing of others, in the course of a few years and with very inadequate appliances, twenty or more millions of African natives spread over an area of nearly a million square miles. The State cannot be excused, however, for the recklessness with which, regardless of the repeated warnings of its early experience, it has persisted in following lines of policy that, however commendable in themselves, were unsuitable for the circumstances in which it was placed, and productive of far more injury than benefit to the people as a whole whom there was pretence of befriending.* Far more inexcusable is the feverish energy with which it has abused the trust imposed upon it at both Conferences by shamelessly, or under transparent cloaks that can deceive no one, converting nearly the whole of the territory assigned to it into a close preserve for exploitation by its own members or by the chartered companies in which it is a partner, and for enslaving, defrauding and in every way maltreating the natives.

The secrecy enjoined upon all officials of the State, and the terrorism exerted over other residents or visitors in the Congo, stood in the way of authentic information as to events known to have occurred reaching Europe till long after their date; and these obstacles still exist to some extent. Indisputable records of facts are, however, available in painful abundance, and some of these will presently

* In support of the above remark two not unfriendly passages may be quoted from Dr. Hinde's 'Fall of the Congo Arabs.' Speaking of the punishments inflicted, even at Leopoldville, for offences scarcely culpable in native opinion, he said (p. 46): "Prisons, in the present state of the country, are almost an impossibility, and the substitute used of chaining the men in gangs is not only detrimental to health, but is in every way pernicious and abominable in the extreme, and should certainly not be used for any but dangerous criminals. When half a dozen or a dozen men are chained in a row and have to work, rest, eat, and sleep, without being ever free of the chain for weeks and sometimes months together, their health naturally gives way." And speaking of the cannibalism which the Government takes credit for prohibiting by decree,

be cited in support of conclusions which it is safe, and might be almost sufficient, to draw from the published decrees of the Congo State itself, as well as from the precedents in wrongdoing set up to their own and their employers' satisfaction by Mr. Stanley, Major von Wissmann, and other pioneers in Congo enterprise.

Consul Pickersgill's Testimony.

In a cautious official report issued in 1898 the late Consul Pickersgill condemned the State's proceedings in terms all the more significant because he was evidently anxious to speak of it as favourably as honesty permitted. After reference to Baron Dhanis's overthrow of the Arabs, he wrote, "It is disappointing to see the outcome of this lofty enterprise sink to a mere modification of the evil that was so righteously attacked. Like the Portuguese in Angola, the Belgians on the Congo have adopted the system of requiring the slave to pay for his freedom by serving a new master during a fixed term of years for wages merely nominal. On this principle is based the *serviçae* system of the first-named possession, and the *libéré* system of the latter; the only difference between the two being that the Portuguese Government permits limited re-enslavement for the benefit of private individuals, but does not purchase on its own account, while the Government of the Independent State retains for itself an advantage which it taboos to everybody else. The State supports this system because labour is more easily obtainable thereby than by enforcing *corvée* amongst the free people, and less expensively than by paying wages.

but encourages by sending cannibal troops to scour all parts of the country and allows to devour the inhabitants, he said (p. 66): "Races who until lately do not seem to have been cannibals, though situated in a country surrounded by cannibal races, have, from increased intercourse with their neighbours, learned to eat human flesh; for since the entry of Europeans into the country greater facilities for travelling and greater safety for travellers have come about. Formerly the people who wandered from their own neighbourhood among the surrounding tribes were killed and eaten, and so did not return among their people to enlighten them by showing that human flesh was useful as an article of food."

The slave so acquired, however, is supposed to have undergone a change of status, and is baptised officially as a free man. After seven years' service under the new name he is entitled to his liberty complete. In Angola the limit is five years."*

Forced Labour.

"The earliest instance of the State's success in enforcing labour," Mr. Pickersgill went on to say, "was the development of the primitive transport service between the Lower and the Upper Congo. Development is the right word to use, because the service was originated before the Government arrived. The first Europeans who travelled inland to Matadi had to rely entirely on porters from the coast, and it was not until the missionaries had gained the confidence of the people, and discovered individuals amongst them who could be trusted as gangers, that the employment of local carriers became feasible. But how did the necessity for compulsion arise? In the same way that it has since arisen in connection with other forms of labour. The State wished to get on faster than circumstances would permit. Accordingly the Government authorities prohibited the missionaries from recruiting where porters were most easily obtained, and under the direction of their military chief, Governor-General Wahis, initiated a vigorous system of *corvée*. In spite of the remuneration, this was resisted, at first by the men liable to serve absenting themselves from home, and afterwards, when the State officers began to seize their women and children as hostages, by preparations for war. Deserting their villages, the people of the caravan route took to the bush, and efforts were made by the chiefs to bring about a general uprising of the entire Cataracts district. Things were in so critical a condition that Colonel Wahis had to leave unpunished the destruction of a Government station and the murder of the officer in charge. Mainly through the influence of the missionaries,

* 'Diplomatic and Consular Reports,' No. 459, Miscellaneous Series (1898), 'Report on the Congo Independent State,' p. 9.

the general conflagration was prevented; but the original outbreak continued to smoulder for months, and transport work of all kinds had to be discontinued until means were devised of equalising the burden of the *corvée* and of enlisting the co-operation of the chiefs in its management."*

The Sentry System.

"That was in 1894," Mr. Pickersgill explained, and the disturbance was chiefly confined to the road between Matadi and Leopoldville and the railway works in progress. "Three years later the system appeared to be working with remarkable smoothness." But the smoothness was only due to the tyrannical legislation of the Government and to the yet more tyrannical perversion of the Government's legislation by its agents, with its approval, and especially to the "sentry" or "sentinel" system which was an outcome of the *chefferies* and *prestations* that provided an unlimited supply of village tyrants. "A sentry on the Congo," according to Mr. Pickersgill, "is a dare-devil aboriginal, chosen, from troops impressed outside the district in which he serves, for his loyalty and force of character. Armed with a rifle and pouch of cartridges, he is located in a native village to see that the labour for which its inhabitants are responsible is duly attended to. If they are india-rubber collectors, his duty is to send the men into the forest and take note of those who do not return with the proper quantity. When food is the tax demanded, his business is to make sure that the women prepare and deliver it: and in every other matter connected with the Government he is the factotum, as far as that village is concerned, of the officer of the district, his power being limited only by the amount of zeal the latter may show in checking oppression."†

Mr. Glave's Experiences.

Very notable illustration of the early working of these systems was furnished by the late Edward James Glave, a young Yorkshireman, born in 1862, who in 1883 entered the service of the Congo International Association as

* 'Report on the Congo Independent State,' p. 10. † *Ibid.*, p. 12.

one of Mr. Stanley's subordinates in his founding of the Free State, and who, after a short trial at Stanley Pool, was sent to build and afterwards take charge of the station at Lukolela, three hundred miles beyond Leopoldville. "His conscientiousness, his inflexible determination to do the most that can be done in a given period, the love with which he sets about it, and the absorbing interest it has for him," * commended him to Mr. Stanley, and Glave showed himself worthy of the praise by nearly six years' work, partly at Équateurville, another hundred miles up, whence he explored the country round. His career was, throughout, especially remarkable for the kindly relations he maintained with the natives. Returning to England in 1889, he went back to Africa in 1893, this time as an independent traveller, anxious to see and faithfully report upon the changes wrought there by Congo State and other operations. After spending nearly a year in Nyasaland, Rhodesia, and elsewhere, he reached the southern end of Lake Tanganyika in September, 1894, and thence proceeded leisurely and often in ill-health to Matadi, where he died on 12th May, 1895. His journals, written from day to day while his experience was fresh, with every desire to speak well of old friends with whom he renewed acquaintance and to think the best of the State and its anti-slavery undertakings, bear the unquestionable stamp of truthfulness and impartiality. They are an unvarnished record of his observations along a route of more than two thousand miles, all the more impressive by reason of its repetitions and reiteration of details.

State Slavery in the Arab Zone.

He was at Moliro, the port on the southwestern corner of Lake Tanganyika, at that time managed by M. Demol for the Société Anti-Esclavagiste de Belgique, on 21st October, 1894, when he noted, "All except the Zanzibari are liberated slaves. Slaves have to serve seven years, being well cared for, fed, and clothed during that time;

* Mr. Stanley's Introduction to Glave's 'Six Years in the Congo' (1892).

afterwards they are at liberty to go where they will." "The Belgians are rather free at flogging, even women are not exempt," he added; and, on 27th October, "Demol is very kind-hearted and hospitable; but I don't think the released natives are very happy with the Belgians—there is too much stick for the slightest offence."*

After leaving Albertville on 6th December, Glave heard much about Wangwana or Zanzibari followers of the Arabs now in the State's service. "The natives," he wrote, "tell me that before the Wangwana came into the country there were flourishing villages, and any amount of food. But now they have all been driven away by the Wangwana slavers and no permanent villages are met, only a few new villages springing up since the whites took decisive measures against the slavers. But I do not think the Belgians are going the right way to work. When the whites asserted their power, the slaves belonging to the elephant-hunters ran away and joined the native villages. The white men were appealed to, and the chiefs, to whom the slaves had fled, were bound and retained until they had delivered back all the slaves to the Wangwana. This they did to regain their liberty; but when they were told that they must leave their mountain retreats and build their villages near the caravan road, they naturally failed to carry out their promises." In his next day's entry we read: "It is said, but I must have it corroborated, that the white officer at Kabambare has commissioned several Wangwana chiefs to make raids in the country of the Warua and bring him the slaves. They are supposed to be taken out of slavery and freed, but I fail to see how this can be argued out. They are taken from their villages and shipped south, to be soldiers, workers, &c., on the State stations, and what were peaceful families have been broken up and the different members spread about the place. They have to be made fast and guarded for transportation,

* An article on 'New Conditions in Central Africa' in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 903.

or they would all run away. This does not look as though the freedom promised had any seductive prospects. The young children thus 'liberated' are handed over to the French Mission stations, where they receive the kindest care, but nothing justifies this form of serfdom. I can understand the State compelling natives to do a certain amount of work for a certain time; but to take people forcibly from their homes, and dispatch them here and there, breaking up families, is not right. I shall learn more about this on the way and at Kabambare. If these conditions are to exist I fail to see how the anti-slavery movement is to benefit the native."*

Anti-Slavery Slave-Raiding.

On 8th December, confirming his earlier surmise, Glave wrote: "The Belgians are employing the Wangwana and their followers to fight the natives; and if captives are taken they are handed over to the authorities at Kabambare. State soldiers are also employed without white officers. This should not be allowed, for the black soldiers do not understand the reason of the fighting, and, instead of submission being sought, often the natives are massacred or driven away into the hills. To-day I met in Sungula's village thirty-five Baluba soldiers, bound on a fighting expedition against the natives to the south of here, because these people do not consent to send tribute ivory to the whites at Kabambare. Sungula is a tall, wiry man who has killed eighty elephants and owned three hundred slaves; two hundred have run away and joined the natives. He says some of his slaves he bought; others had trouble in the villages, and, fearful of punishment, gave themselves up; some were caught in fights against the natives. Sungula tells that previous to the last fight of Rumaliza and the Belgians he was invited to join the campaign by Sefu, son of Tipu-Tipu, who came to Sungula's village, and wrote letters to Rumaliza, who was at Ujiji. When Rumaliza fled he called at the village of Sungula, and advised the

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 907.

latter to remain in the country and accept the Belgian flag." Again, a day later, "The Manyema soldiers complain that the native hunters do not go after elephants. Sungula says the reason is that when the hunters are absent the Manyema soldiers take their wives. This is a heinous offence in the eyes of the natives, who have a superstition that, if the wife does not remain constant when the husband is away fighting or hunting dangerous game, the hunter will be sure to suffer serious failure, wounds, or death. The natives of the Congo have the same idea, which prevails generally throughout Central Africa. Sungula does not seem pleased with the big party of Baluba soldiers without a white man. He thinks the natives, upon seeing the forces brought against them, will submit, and pay the desired tribute. But the black soldiers are bent on fighting and raiding; they want no peaceful settlement. They have good rifles and ammunition, realise their superiority over the natives with their bows and arrows, and they want to shoot and kill and rob. Black delights to kill black, whether the victim be man, woman, or child, and no matter how defenceless. This is no reasonable way of settling the land; it is merely persecution. Blacks cannot be employed on such an errand unless under the leadership of whites."*

On 10th December, after reaching the village of Lobangula, Glave reported: "He makes the following complaint against the Manyema soldiers who arrived at his village two days ago. The soldiers saw one or two guns leaning against the huts, loaded and capped. They fired off two of these in the air, then went searching through the village and found in the huts other guns, loaded and capped. In two huts where guns were found two natives were made fast and beaten, one very badly lacerated, his shoulders being cut most unmercifully; the other bears the marks of the *chicotte* on his back and a swollen eye as the result of beating. The chief arrived on the scene, and asked the

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 908.

reason of this treatment. The Manyema replied that the villagers had been arming to fight against the whites. The chief replied that this was not so. He had acknowledged the whites, and hoisted the flag given to him by the white men at Kabambare; moreover, he was engaged in collecting rubber for the whites. He explained that he was menaced by his near neighbours, and, as a matter of precaution, his people kept their guns in readiness. The soldiers were not satisfied by this explanation. The chief was seized and bound, and kept so for several hours, and released only after he had consented to pay to his persecutors one goat, ten fowls, and two slave girls; then he was set free and the eight guns were returned. Then the hut of Lobangula was rifled. The brutal action of the soldiers so terrified the people that many fled into hiding and have not returned. Lobangula says that in future, when he hears of the approach of a party of soldiers without white men, he and his people will go into hiding till they have passed, as he is afraid of them."*

The next day's narrative is: "After five hours' hard marching from Lobangula's I reached Bwana Msa's place, in a hollow surrounded on all sides by wooded hills. After the fight with the whites he remained quiet, and when the white men came to Kabambare he asked for a Congo Free State flag. After receiving it he thought he would be free from attack; but a party of black soldiers, under a headman, Furahani, attacked the village, looted the place, and killed three of his people. Since then the State soldiers have inflicted repeated persecution on him, stealing everything he has. He has given them food each time they have passed. Not content with this, they steal everything on the plantation and in the houses. If the rightful owners object, they are beaten; the women are taken by force. Msa says he is afraid to complain to Kabambare for fear that out of revenge the soldiers will inflict persecution worse than ever. The whole country is being upset

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 810.

by the brutal and thoroughly unjustifiable conduct of the soldiers."*

The Kabambare School for Soldiers.

Having on 14th December arrived at Kabambare, which, according to Baron Dhanis's plan, had been converted into an important training establishment for Congo State soldiers since its capture in the previous January, and having been "met very kindly by Lieutenant Hambursin and Mr. Sinade his second," Glave reported on the following day: "Hambursin has been here since April last. He has a good and substantial brick house in course of construction and nearly finished, needing only doors and windows and plastering. He has a big force at the station; four hundred soldiers, with their women and children—in all over one thousand people." On 17th December it was added: "Yesterday the natives in a neighbouring village came to complain that one of Hambursin's soldiers had killed a villager; they brought in the offender's gun. To-day at roll-call the soldier appeared without his gun; his guilt was proved, and without more to do he was hanged on a tree. Hambursin has hanged several for the crime of murder." And, a day later: "The tribute exacted from the natives consists of rubber, ivory, and labour. From six till about seven Hambursin himself gives instruction to the soldiers, who march headed by a band of drummers beating native instruments and whistling. The bugle-call is understood and very well produced by the soldiers. Hambursin was through all the fighting against Rumaliza; he says that Dhanis and Ponthier are to receive the credit of the campaign. Ponthier mastered the country between Stanley Falls and Kasongo, and Dhanis that between Lusambo and Kasongo, and as far as Kabambare. All the troops here are Baluba and from the neighbouring tribes, men taken in the fights. They are to serve seven years at a small salary, cloth, and provisions; after seven years they are free to go where they like. Hambursin is a stern

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 911.

master; but without that the spirit of this big horde of men would be decidedly rebellious."*

The New Slavery in Operation.

"I do not think the natives are making much out of this partition of Africa," Glave remarked on the same day. "Something should be done to permit their earning a living, to give them comfort and content. Formerly an ordinary white man was merely called 'bwana' or 'mzungu'; now the smallest insect of a pale face earns the title of 'bwana mkubwa' (big master). During the campaign against the Arabs by the soldiers of the Congo Free State many cannibals were to be seen—so officers tell me—provisioning themselves from the killed. This anti-slavery movement has its dark side also. The natives suffer. In stations in charge of white men, Government officers, one sees strings of poor emaciated old women, some of them mere skeletons, working from six in the morning till noon, and from half-past two till six, carrying clay water jars, tramping about in gangs with a rope round the neck, and connected by a rope one and a half yards apart. They are prisoners of war. In war the old women are always caught, but should receive a little humanity. They are naked, except for a miserable patch of cloth of several parts, held in place by a string round the waist. They are not loosened from the rope for any purpose. They live in the guardhouse under the charge of black native sentries, who delight in slapping and ill-using them, for pity is not in the heart of the native. Some of the women have babies, but they go to work just the same. They form indeed a miserable spectacle, and one wonders that old women, although prisoners of war, should not receive a little more consideration; at least their nakedness might be hidden. The men prisoners are treated in a far better way."†

On 21st December Glave "saw an old woman prisoner, who had died, being dragged to burial by her fellow-prisoners

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 912. † *Ibid.*, p. 913.

in the rope-gang." On Christmas Day he had theme for reflection on "the miserable, hard-worked, half-starved prisoners, under control of brutal sentries, who delight in every opportunity of ill-treating the wretches placed in their care." *

Captain Lothaire and his Soldiers.

On 29th December he was at the village of Kestro, near to Kasongo, where he made an interesting note as to the proceedings of the administrator of the district a fortnight before the killing of Mr. Stokes. "Kibongo, who ordered the assassination of Emin Pasha," he reported, "is being deserted, and one of his own people, in consideration of cloth, is leading Lothaire to Kibongo's hiding-place. The district of Piana Kitete (piana means successor of') is said to be full of incorrigible thieves and bravados, who have attacked caravans several times; but I am assured that Kitete's people have been most unmercifully persecuted by the State soldiers who arrive in the villages, and, without any payment save blows and curses, take fowls and bananas, destroy cooking-pots, &c." The next day's entry is: "I camped near the village of Piana Kitete to-day. He is in a sad frame of mind; says that he and his people have been fought and raided now four times for no reason that he knows of. Nearly all the women and children have been taken from his villages by Kibangula, Kalombola, and Falabi, the 'Niamparas' of Kasongo. Kitete swears he has done the whites no harm, nor have the Congo State soldiers or porters been molested by him. On the contrary, he received the Congo Free State flag, and sent goats to Kasongo. The last goats he sent to Kibangula, and also some slaves. The slaves were accepted and the guardians of the goats were also retained as captives. His people's huts have all been burnt, and they have been so hunted that they have not made new huts. A soldier on the trail has women, and always a boy servant; his wife carries his sleeping outfit, food, &c., cloth, and sandals; his boy carries

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 913.

his cartridges and gun. Often the wife carries the gun. Some of the soldiers have several wives. Piana Kitete says all his people want to emigrate to more peaceful regions, but he restrains them. A native accompanying a white man, even as an ordinary porter, an occupation as humble as that of a pack donkey, calls other natives 'washensi,' a scornful word for savage. A military spirit prevails through the whole settlement of Kabambare."*

Belgian Successors of Arabs.

Passing the ruins of Tipu-Tipu's Kasongo the traveller on 3rd January, 1895, reached New Kasongo, on the Lualaba river, of which Lieutenant Francken was in charge. "The station," he wrote, "is surrounded by villages that pay tribute in different ways. Some do paddling, others build, others again bring in wood for building purposes. Some bring in ivory and rubber. The place has a population of 15,000, nearly all slaves. I left New Kasongo and followed the right or east bank of the Lualaba to Nyangwe, which is built on a treeless plain ; all the timber for building purposes comes from the opposite bank of the river. Lemery has done good work here. He says Nyangwe can be made to produce fifteen tons of rubber a month, when more tribes are brought under control. Also a good deal of ivory is brought in for tribute and for sale. In connection with the station there are five thousand auxiliaries, who are sent all over the country to beat the natives into submission to the State. They go in bands of 1,000, men, women, and children, and all belongings, settle upon a suitable spot in a rich district, then bring the natives under their control and prepare the way for the white man to establish a post. The natives, who are all cannibals, are persecuted till they submit. Then there is no more trouble."†

Glave's account of the condition in which he found every

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIII., p. 914.

† *Ibid.*, p. 915. Lieutenant Lemery was afterwards appointed manager for the Compagnie du Lomani, started in July, 1898.

place that he visited between Lake Tanganyika and the Lomani, less than a year after the country had been conquered for the Congo State, reveals the inherent vices of the administrative system that had now been set up. Slavery had been abolished only in name. If there was no more avowed slave-hunting, the collection of ivory, rubber, and other marketable commodities was as reckless as ever, and the savages employed as soldiers of the State were at least as cruel as they or others had been under Arab domination.

And the traveller's experience was scarcely different after he left Nyangwe on 17th January, 1895, and passed down the Lualaba and the Congo on his way to Matadi.

His first halt was at Bayonge. "This," he said, "is a post under Lemery. The natives have complained that they are compelled to bring rubber, which is bought by the officers of the Congo Free State; half of the price paid goes to the mgwana, or chief, of the district, and half goes to the natives. Many villagers refuse to bring rubber; then they are attacked and killed or taken prisoners. While I was at Bayonge an expedition sent by Manahuto, under the orders of Lemery, arrived after having a fight with natives on the other side of the Uzimbu. Many natives are said to have been killed, and thirty prisoners taken, mostly women." "Everywhere," we read in the next day's record, "the natives are friendly and polite; and, thanks to the education received from Lemery, they are all well disciplined and submissive to the white men's demands. The natives are not lazy, good-for-nothing fellows. Their fine powers are obtained by hard work, sobriety and frugal living."*

Hangings and Floggings.

On 24th January the traveller was at Risari's village near Riba-Riba, of which Lieutenant Rue, "a non-commissioned officer in the Belgian Army," was in charge. "Rue has built excellent dwellings," Glave reported. "He

* A further article entitled 'Cruelty in the Congo Free State' in the *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 699, 701.

produces stores of rubber a month and one thousand pounds of ivory. There is good discipline in the station. The chain-gang is always a disgusting sight to see in the stations on the Zone Arabe, as those confined are generally old women, reduced to skeletons by want of liberty, hard treatment by the negro sentries, and hunger. The policy of the Arabs is being rather too closely followed, and the natives are treated with the utmost severity. Five women who had deserted were in chains at Riba-Riba; all were cut very badly, having been most severely chicotted, or flogged. Lemery does not flog much, and uses only the bastinado for women." This official's conduct towards natives, cruel as it was, appears indeed to have been better than that of some of his colleagues further east. "Hangings are now quite frequent on the State stations in the Zone Arabe; the administration is quite different from the treatment of the natives on the Congo. At Kabambare there is a tree upon which a lot of people have been hanged —natives, Wangwana, and soldiers. At Kasongo I saw no construction for this purpose. At Nyangwe and Riba-Riba there is a wooden frame which has often served the purpose. Here at Risari's there is one of those ugly constructions for hangings. It is said that three natives were hanged by Rue because they would not work salt for the Congo Free State. The natives have not a very gay time of it. Before the whites came the Wangwana and Arabs were their masters; but now the Congo Free State authorities favour the Wangwana element far more than the natives, and the Wangwana and the Arabs have accorded to them the authority of bygone days, with tremendous power, which is most unmercifully employed. When a village does not consent to make rubber, the mgwana of that particular district is empowered to fight the offending village, and to kill and take prisoners, which is quite general. Kibangula had just returned to Kasongo at the time of my arrival, having been engaged on a devastating exploit, burning, killing, and taking prisoners,

two hundred of whom were brought to Kasongo station, being principally the people of Piana Kitete, who at the time of my visit to his village, just after a fight, came and gave me a goat, and asked me why he was attacked, his villages burned, his people rendered homeless, some killed, others like himself driven to hiding in the mountains."*

"The *chicotte* of raw hippo hide, especially a new one, trimmed like a corkscrew, with edges like knife-blades, and as hard as wood," Glave explained, in terms all the more notable because his own views as to corporal punishment cannot be regarded as over-lenient, "is a terrible weapon, and a few blows bring blood; not more than twenty-five blows should be given unless the offence is very serious. Though we persuade ourselves that the African's skin is very tough, it needs an extraordinary constitution to withstand the terrible punishment of one hundred blows; generally the victim is in a state of insensibility after twenty-five or thirty blows. At the first blow he yells abominably; then he quiets down, and is a mere groaning, quivering body till the operation is over, when the culprit stumbles away, often with gashes which will endure a lifetime. It is bad enough the flogging of men, but far worse is this punishment when inflicted on women and children. Small boys of ten or twelve, with excitable, hot-tempered masters, are often most harshly treated. At Kasongo there is a great deal of cruelty displayed. I saw two boys very badly cut. At Nyangwe and Riba-Riba boys are punished by beating on the hands. I conscientiously believe that a man who receives one hundred blows is often nearly killed, and has his spirit broken for life."†

"Before the arrival of the Arabs ivory had no value; the natives often did not store it," we are next told. "Having killed an elephant, they took only the meat; and when the Arabs came and, pointing to the ivory, wished to buy, the natives hunted about in the woods for ivory of elephants dead a long time, and big points were sold for a handful of

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 701, 702. † *Ibid.*, p. 703.

beads, or a copper or brass ornament. Kibongo was the first to settle after Stanley's passage, he is said to have bought immense stores of ivory, but all seem to have spent all they had. All the natives along here joined Tipu-Tipu on his way to Stanley Falls to establish himself, and they fought and took part in raids for him." "All Arabs," it is added, "have been permitted to retain their slaves. Laschet contemplates a journey into the interior to organise the rubber industry. The market at present is small, but native villages are building in the vicinity."*

Glave's next statement illustrates another of the scandals incident to Congo State rule. "Two days before my arrival," he wrote at Wabundu, now known as Ponthierville, "two Sierra Leoneans were hanged by Laschet. They were sentries on guard and, while they were asleep, allowed a native chief, who was a prisoner and in chains, to escape. Next morning Laschet, in a fit of rage, hanged the two men. They were British subjects engaged by the Congo Free State as soldiers. In time of war, I suppose, they could be executed, after court martial, by being shot; but to hang a subject of any other country, without trial, seems to me outrageous."†

In the Aruwimi District.

After a few days' halt at Stanley Falls the traveller started on 20th February for Basoko, the station at the mouth of the Aruwimi. "The natives," he reported, "are compelled to transport in their canoes all State loads for nothing; also to provide work-people for the station, generally women; and each chief must bring a certain amount of fish. Occasionally they receive a small present of cloth. The State conducts its pacification of the country after the fashion of the Arabs, so the natives are not gainers at all. The Arabs in the employ of the State are compelled to bring in ivory and rubber, and are permitted to employ any measures considered necessary to obtain this result. They employ the same means as in days gone

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 703, 704. † *Ibid.*, p. 704.

by, when Tipu-Tipu was one of the masters of the situation. They raid villages, take slaves, and give them back for ivory. The State has not suppressed slavery, but established a monopoly by driving out the Arab and Wangwana competitors. The State soldiers are constantly stealing, and sometimes the natives are so persecuted that they resent this by killing and eating their tormentors. Recently the State post on the Lomani lost two men, killed and eaten by the natives. Arabs were sent to punish the natives; many women and children were taken, and twenty-one heads were brought to the Falls, and have been used by Captain Rom as a decoration round a flower-bed in front of his house. Basoko is in a serious position, surrounded by a powerful enemy, so close that they can hear their speaking-drums. It is the natural outcome of the harsh, cruel policy of the State in wringing rubber from these people without paying for it. The revolution will extend." Three days later Glave wrote from Isangi, midway between Stanley Falls and Basoko: "The post is close to the large settlement of an important coast man, Kayamba, who now is devoted to the interests of the State, catching slaves for them, and stealing ivory from the natives of the interior. Does the philanthropic King of the Belgians know about this? If not, he ought to."*

Rebellion in the Équateur District.

Proceeding from Basoko, past the Bangala and Équateur districts, the principal sphere of his work in former years, Glave found matters in even worse state than elsewhere. On 25th February he wrote from Basoko: "The natives who are in revolt are now close to the station. They killed twenty-two soldiers of the post within three hours, and during our stay speared a State soldier within five minutes' walk of the station. They say they have made 'medicine,' and discovered by it that their efforts against the white man will be successful, but they must not begin the attack till after the appearance of new moon in a

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 705, 706.

day or so." On 27th February, from Bumba: "Found that the chief of the station, a Norwegian officer, Sundt, was away on a war expedition in the *Ville de Ghent.* The persistent badgering of the natives for rubber and ivory has led to the revolt. All are agreed on this point." And on 5th March, from Coquilhatville: "Formerly the natives were well treated, but now expeditions have been sent in every direction, forcing natives to make rubber and to bring it to the stations. Up the Ikelemba, away to Lake Mantumba, the State is perpetrating its fiendish policy in order to obtain profit. We are taking down one hundred slaves mere children, all taken in unholy wars against the natives. While at the mission station I saw a gang of prisoners taken along by the State soldiers. War has been waged all through the district of Équateur, and thousands of people have been killed and homes destroyed. It was not necessary in the olden times when we white men had no force at all. This forced commerce is depopulating the country." The next day's entry is: "Left Équateur at eleven o'clock this morning, after taking on a cargo of one hundred small slaves, principally boys, seven or eight years old, with a few girls among the batch, all stolen from the natives. The commissary of the district is a violent-tempered fellow. While arranging to take on the hundred small slaves a woman who had charge of the youngsters was rather slow in understanding his order, delivered in very poor Kibanji: he sprang at her, slapped her in the face, and, as she ran away, kicked her. They talk of philanthropy and civilisation! Where it is I do not know."*

Ruin in the Middle Congo.

Arriving at his old station, Lukolela, on 8th March, Glave was startled by the changes that had taken place since he left it some nine years before. "There are few natives now on this side of the river," he wrote; "all have been driven to the other side by the impatient policy of the white man who succeeded Schoen here. Very few people

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 706-708.

came on the beach to-day; in old times crowds thronged the place. Of the *libérés* brought down the river many die. They are badly cared for; no clothes to wear in the rainy season, sleep where there is no shelter, and no attention when sick. The one hundred youngsters on board are ill-cared for by the State; most of them are quite naked, with no covering for the night. They make small fires, and huddle round these for warmth. Many are getting the germs of disease sown in their little bodies. Their offence is that their fathers and brothers fought for a little independence. Most white officers out on the Congo are averse to the india-rubber policy of the State, but the laws command it. Therefore, at each post one finds the natives deserting their homes, and escaping to the French side of the river when possible. Hundreds of people are killed in the wars, whereas if the State merely conducted a humane administration, and allowed traders gradually to develope the rubber industry, there would be no fighting. The Bakongo have gradually taken to labour, the number of porters increasing each year. The same progress would have been possible on the Upper River. The decrease in the native population is very marked at Bangala, Équateur, Lukolela, and Bolobo."*

"Everywhere the Same News."

"Everywhere," Glave wrote from Leopoldville, which he reached on 12th March, "I hear the same news of the doings of the Congo Free State — rubber and murder, slavery in its worst form. It is said that half the *libérés* sent down die on the road." Four days later he added:— "All the children *libérés* are handed over to the Jesuit mission at Kimuenza, south-east four hours from Leopoldville. A *père* told Mr. Rogers that seventy-three died during the month, and thirty-five only a month or two ago. In Europe we understand from the word *libérés* slaves saved from their cruel masters. Not at all! Most of them result from wars made against the natives because of ivory or

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., p. 708.

rubber. It is only the State officials who make war: seldom do the traders have any trouble, and the missionaries never."*

That remark, of course, had reference to the old-fashioned traders, not to the new chartered companies. "On the other side of Nkisi," wrote Glave, after he had left Leopoldville on 26th March, "I passed five whites destined for the Mongala river as agents of the Société Commerciale Anversoise. They are all sub-officers in the Belgian army. It seems to me rather a heartless proceeding to send off inexperienced men to a deadly hole like the Mongala, but the State wants money, and ivory is money, and in the Mongala there is plenty of ivory. These sub-officers are poorly paid in the army, and the three hundred dollars a year, with percentage of purchases, presents to them a golden prospect." At Lukungu, again, when he was nearing Matadi, Glave wrote on 5th April, "I met Baron de Rezen, chief of the public force at Lukungu and chief of the station. He agrees that rubber is the cause of all the trouble on the Congo, but excuses the State on the ground that it is necessary for it to have funds. He thinks the small posts placed among the natives without whites a mistake; the blacks thus vested with a little authority immediately take advantage of it, and ill-treat the natives." "These people," it was added three days later, "are a hardy race, but the carrying business is a great strain on the system, as is also the constant drenching they get in wet seasons. Often they suffer from hunger, and there are never spare men with a caravan, so that in case of sickness the carrier still has to lug along his sixty-five pounds' weight, a hard enough task for a well man, but killing for an invalid. One sees some miserable wretches dragging along in the rear of a caravan. To-day I saw the dead body of a carrier lying on the trail. There could have been no mistake about his being a sick man; he was nothing but skin and bones. These posts ought to give

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., p. 709.

some care to the porters; the heartless disregard for life is abominable. Two days ago a native applied to me for medicine and food; he was ill and starving. The same day I met a poor liberated slave, emaciated, with nothing to eat. I gave him food, but could not understand his language, as he was a poor wretch stolen from a far-away home. Native life is considered of no value by the Belgians. No wonder the State is hated. Carrying is pushed to such an extent that it is killing the people. They are on the road the whole time, without rest to enable them to recuperate and get strong after each trip. Often the mission stations are applied to for succour, but, as a rule, when the carriers present themselves they are thoroughly overcome by the exertion of carrying a load while ill, and they generally die. Formerly the State sent out its soldiers to tie up the women when the people refused to come in as carriers. This has now been stopped."*

Glave's Conclusions.

Glave reached Matadi towards the end of April, and was there until his death on 12th May, nursed by Mr. and Mrs. Lawson Forfeitt, of the American Baptist Missionary Union. From Matadi, on 25th April, he thus summed up some of the conclusions forced upon him by his memorable and melancholy experiences: "The occupation of the territories of the Congo Free State by the Belgians is an enormous expense, and the administration is making most frantic efforts to obtain a revenue of a size sufficient to enable it to pay its way. In the fighting consequent upon this policy, owing to the inability or disinclination of natives to bring in rubber, slaves are taken—men, women, and children, called in State documents *libérés!* These slaves or prisoners are most of them sent down-stream, first to Leopoldville. There the children are handed over to a Jesuit mission to be schooled and to receive military training from a State officer established at the mission for

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., pp. 710-713.

that purpose. In two years this Catholic mission has buried three hundred of these poor, unfortunate little children, victims of the inhuman policy of the Congo Free State! On the *Ville de Bruxelles*, the big State boat upon which I descended the Congo, we took on board at the Équateur 102 little homeless, motherless, fatherless children, varying from four years to seven or eight, among them a few little girls. Many of them had frightful ulcers which showed no sign of having been attended to, although there was a State doctor at the Équateur station. Some few had a tiny strip of cloth, two or three inches wide, tucked in a string around the waist to hide their nakedness, but half of them were perfectly naked. As they were huddled together on the lower deck of the boat on the damp, chill mornings, shivering with cold, death was marking many more for hasty baptism and a grave at the Jesuit mission near Leopoldville. By the time we reached Kinshasa, Stanley Pool, there was a great deal of sickness among the children, principally fevers and coughs; many were hopelessly ill. If the Arabs had been the masters, it would be styled iniquitous trafficking in human flesh and blood; but being under the administration of the Congo Free State, it is merely a part of their *philanthropic* system of *liberating* the natives. The whole world seems to think that the Congo Free State is a civilising influence, and that philanthropy and love of justice are prompting every effort of the administration."*

Almost the last entry in the traveller's record was this, dated 2nd May, quoting the information of his missionary friends: "Mr. Harvey heard from Clarke, who is at Lake Mantumba, that the State soldiers have been in the vicinity of his station recently, fighting and taking prisoners; and he himself has seen several men with bunches of hands signifying their individual kill. These, I presume, they must produce to prove their success! Among the hands

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., p. 796.

were those of men and women, and also those of little children. The missionaries are so much at the mercy of the State that they do not report these barbaric happenings to the people at home. I have previously heard of hands, among them children's, being brought to the stations, but I was not so satisfied of the truth of the former information as of the reports received just now by Mr. Harvey from Clarke. Much of this sort of thing is going on at the Équateur station. The methods employed are not necessary. Years ago, when I was on duty at the Équateur without soldiers, I never had any difficulty in getting what men I needed, nor did any other station in the old, humane days. The stations and the boats then had no difficulty in finding men or labour, nor will the Belgians if they introduce more reasonable methods."*

There was too much truth in the statement that "the missionaries are so much at the mercy of the State that they do not report these barbaric happenings to the people at home." Though a good deal of information tardily leaked out, it was generally in such cautious language, designed to conceal the identity of the informants, that it was too vague and incomplete to be in any way authoritative. Fuller and more trustworthy information was in some cases — as regards localities in which they were interested and with which they were intimately acquainted — communicated to the central organisations by missionaries in their employ. These authentic details, however, were as far as possible withheld from outsiders. They were used, more or less successfully, in securing from the Congo Government better treatment of the natives within the very limited areas of the aggrieved missionary agencies, and perhaps other indirect profit resulted from them. But they were not allowed to reach the public ear, or to arouse public opinion in favour of changes that, in bringing incalculable benefit to millions of Congo

* *Century Magazine*, Vol. LIV., p. 714.

natives, might have been prejudicial to the missionary organisations.*

The Stokes Affair.

As Glave's journals were not published before the end of 1896 the first really effective flash of light thrown on the lawlessness and cruelty prevalent in so many parts of the Congo State's territory came from an offence committed in the Arab Zone while Glave was crossing it, but, as he was four hundred miles away, not known to him, and only indirectly affecting the position of either natives or missionaries. Mr. Charles Henry Stokes, formerly a missionary in Uganda, had for some years been trading in ivory and other articles, which he chiefly paid for in arms and ammunition, and had made himself obnoxious to the Congo authorities by his partnership with German traders, when, by order of Captain Lothaire, then in charge of the Stanley Falls district, he was entrapped at Kilongalonga, between the Falls and Lake Albert Edward, on the 9th January, 1895, taken to Lothaire's camp at Lindi, and, after a sham trial, illegal in every particular, hanged on the 14th; it was alleged by Lothaire's own hand. This "execution" naturally aroused much indignation when it was reported in Europe, and the expostulations and threats of the British Government so far prevailed over or varied the prevarications and evasions of the Congo Government that its perpetrator was put through a second and more scandalous sham trial at Boma in April, 1896, and, as the result of a perfunctory appeal, through a third sham trial, yet more scandalous and farcical, in Brussels in August, 1896.†

The professed object of the Boma trial, the proceedings of which a Vice-Consul was sent out to watch on behalf of

* I make this statement deliberately as the result of admissions made to me by several Congo missionaries, including two members of the Natives Protection Commission to be presently referred to, and by managers of Protestant and Catholic missionary organisations both in London and in Brussels.

† All the facts, or materials available for ascertaining them, are exhaustively set forth in a 'Parliamentary Paper' (C. 8276), Africa, No. 8 (1896), of 188 foolscap pages.

the British Government, was "to obtain a full investigation into all the circumstances attending the death of Mr. Stokes, and into the evidence on which he was convicted, as well as into the legality of the proceedings of the Court before which he was brought." All that was attempted in the course of three days' inquiry, even by the nominal prosecutor appointed by the Congo Government, was to discredit Mr. Stokes on account of his antecedents, and, in effect, to prove that, a bad name having been given to him under other conditions, he only deserved hanging like a dog; and it was an incident of the inquiry that Captain Lothaire, although acquitted, was "greatly incensed with the Government of the Free State for prosecuting him, as he thought they had approved his action, considering that, after they had been informed of the proceedings of the Conseil de Guerre held at Lindi, they promoted him to the high rank of Commissaire Général."* The Brussels trial, before a Conseil Supérieur, admittedly incompetent, was deliberately appointed for a date at which evidence for the prosecution could not possibly be procured from Africa, and the prosecuting counsel vied with his opponent in calling for the acquittal of Commissary-General Lothaire, after the latter, without an oath being administered to him, had been "invited to stand up and explain his reasons."† After seventeen months' acrimonious, irritating, and futile controversy, very inadequate compensation was grudgingly accorded to Mr. Stokes's family for the property stolen from him, but not for his murder; and to a declaration by M. Van Eetvelde, following a long string of quibbles, that "the Government of the Congo Independent State cannot admit that, as a matter of fact, it has neglected any of the obligations imposed on it by a regard for impartial justice," Lord Salisbury made the cynical reply that "Her Majesty's Government do not admit the cogency of the contentions of the Congo Government, but they are of opinion that no prac-

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 8 (1896), pp. 104, 122.

† *Ibid.*, p. 163.

tical result will be obtained by continuing the correspondence."*

The Natives Protection Commission.

It was evidently as a sop to European opinion—which, besides being outraged by the Stokes affair, was beginning to be further aroused by fuller and more painful reports concerning the treatment of black men—that on 18th September, 1896, less than six weeks after the final verdict on one white man's death for which Captain Lothaire had been promoted, "a permanent Commission charged with the protection of natives throughout the territory of the State" was appointed. The Congo Government, never neglectful of an opportunity for making pretence of philanthropy, showed remarkable shrewdness in the method and occasion chosen for this new piece of hypocrisy. The Commissioners were invited to notify to the judicial authorities "acts of violence of which natives may be victims," and each was at liberty, on his own responsibility, "to exercise this right of protection and to communicate directly with the Governor-General." Moreover, it was announced that "the Commission will point out to the Government measures to be taken to prevent slave-trading, to render more effective the prohibition or restriction of the liquor traffic, and to gradually bring about the disappearance of barbarous customs, such as cannibalism, human sacrifices, and ordeal by poison." Its first members, appointed for two years, were Mgr. Van Ronslé, the Vicar Apostolic of the Congo, as President; Father Van Hencxthoven, Superior of the Jesuit Mission; Father de Cleene, of the Scheut Congregation; Dr. A. Sims, of the American Baptist Missionary Union; and the Reverends W. Holman Bentley and George Grenfell, of the English Baptist Missionary Society, the last named as Secretary.†

These six commissioners were doubtless worthy repre-

* 'Parliamentary Papers,' Africa, No. 8 (1896), p. 183, 184.

† 'Bulletin Officiel' (1886), p. 253.

sentatives of the 140 Roman Catholic and 220 Protestant missionaries, or thereabouts,* of both sexes and eighteen separate organisations, then working in various parts of Belgian Congoland; but all appear to have been generally stationed in or near Leopoldville, and few of their comrades had penetrated into regions remote from the Congo river and its principal affluents. It was in the out-of-the-way districts, in which the only white residents or visitors were military men and traders' agents, that there was special danger of "acts of violence," and of such acts it could not be expected that the missionaries would have sufficient cognisance for any reports they might send in to receive, or perhaps to be regarded as deserving, much attention. The commissioners' functions, it must be noted, moreover, were limited to reporting and suggesting. They were not to have any executive powers. They could neither institute official inquiries nor take preventive or punitive measures; and how much attention would be paid at Boma to reports or complaints made by them in the interests of black people may be inferred from the patronage accorded there to the executioner of Mr. Stokes. It is in no way surprising that, although it has been reappointed for form's sake, the Natives Protection Commission has from the first been of no practical utility.

Other Reform Proposals.

As useless would seem to have been the nomination at the same date of M. Michel as a State Inspector, with disciplinary powers, to see that the instructions of the Government were carried out in the Upper Congo, especially as regards the treatment of natives, and to report every three months upon the results of his inspection; also the elaborate directions simultaneously promulgated for the guidance of heads of expeditions and commissaries of districts in their dealings with natives. The declared purport of these directions was that humane and conciliatory tactics should be pursued, and needless quarrels

* The above numbers are from the returns for 1897.

and needless severity avoided, so that the natives might not mistrust the intentions and sentiments of the State regarding them, "a misunderstanding that must inevitably be provoked by over-hasty resort to extreme measures." The terms of the instructions, indeed, show, not that the Government seriously desired or expected the redress of grave abuses and scandals, but that it was well aware of the existence of such abuses and scandals. They made it clear, for instance, that the agents of the State had hitherto been lacking in "the tact necessary for avoidance of conflicts which may arise from misapprehensions and practices too much at variance with native usages and customs," and that they had not, 'before coming to blows with the natives," recognised that "it is more advantageous to obtain reparation for injury by pacific action than by resort to arms." The agents were urged to remember that, wherever employment of force seemed necessary, the Government ought first to be informed on the subject and its sanction obtained; that the operations should then be so conducted that, as far as possible, only those really at fault would be attacked; and that, in time of war, the property of natives must not be destroyed, their villages burnt, or their wounded tortured. Along with much else, they were enjoined "not to award other disciplinary punishments than are appointed for breach of discipline, or to pervert legal forms for the repression of offences of which servants of the State may be guilty," and to bear in mind that punishments for breach of military discipline were only applicable to native soldiers under conditions distinctly laid down, and "were not applicable, under any pretext, to non-military servants of the State or to natives, whether or not the latter were in rebellion against the State."*

Of the monstrous defiance of the principles laid down in those and such like instructions evidence had by that time come to be available.

* 'Bulletin Officiel' (1896), pp. 255-9.

Evidence as to Abuses.

Some samples of it may now be given, and they will be selected from the statements of informants not open to the complaint made by the Congo Government against retired servants of the State, that their allegations, whether true or not, were in violation of the rules of secrecy imposed on them.*

Mr. Murphy's Testimony.

The Rev. J. B. Murphy, of the American Baptist Missionary Union, which has its principal station at Équateurville, adjacent to the local centre of Congo State administration at Coquilhatville, was in England in November, 1895, and the report of his experiences in his own district, as well as of accounts received by him from friends elsewhere, confirms, in many important particulars, the independent and not then published testimony of Mr. Glave as to occurrences spread over a much wider area. "When I left"—that is, in August, 1895—he said, "the people were in a very unsettled condition and most unfriendly to the State. The revolt which had broken out throughout the Aruwimi district in consequence of the tyranny of the State officers in regard to the rubber traffic had been quelled; but not until the State troops, which had been forced to retire upon Basoko and to withstand a siege there, had been reinforced. Scarcely, however, had the steamers which had been sent to the relief of the station returned to Stanley Pool before two were again dispatched, during the months of June and July, to quell another disturbance which had broken out at Luluaburg,

* For this reason quotations are not here given from the startling and specific statements made by Captain P. Salusbury in the *United Service Magazine* of June, 1896, by Mr. Alfred Parminter in the *Times* of 8th September, 1896, and by others, though many of these statements are in notable agreement with Mr. Glave's earlier record, not known to them when they wrote, and with those of Mr. Murphy, Mr. Sjöblom, and others, which are cited above. Two other corroborative statements, unfortunatety anonymous, appeared in the *Times* of 14th October, 1895, one by a missionary who had been "working in the Upper Congo for fourteen years," another by "an Englishman lately returned after some years' residence."

on the Kasai. This time it was a revolt of the State troops against their own officers. The soldiers killed one and wounded another, leaving him for dead upon the field. They then looted the station and escaped into the interior. Although the authorities sent up a strong detachment of forces from Stanley Pool, and commenced hostilities on a larger scale, most of the fugitives are still at large. I was near the mouth of the Kasai when the news of the revolt came down. The wounded officer, although he lay exposed to the sun for many hours, finally reached the Roman Catholic mission station, where his wounds were dressed The attitude of the natives of the Congo Free State is everywhere unfriendly, and if the people do not universally rebel against authority it is because they are reduced to a state of despair. If possible they leave the territory. Two of the most flourishing towns in Mr. H. M. Stanley's time, situated at Stanley Pool—viz., Kintama and Kinshasa—are now no more, and the people have gone over to the French Congo. Besides the natives of the towns I have named, many people have left the main river and gone into the interior in order to escape the arbitrary demands of the State. Difficulties had arisen, too, between the State and the porters, and as the requisite number of carriers were not forthcoming detachments of soldiers were sent with orders to capture all the women they could find. Several Christians were arrested in this manner. The natives and missionaries remonstrated, and presented a letter to the Governor, without getting any redress. The people were so enraged at these outrages that they took matters in their own hands. They killed three white men, and met and defeated the State forces in more than one pitched engagement. On the Lower Congo the natives have good Snider rifles, and their many conflicts with the State have taught them the arts of war. In many of these fights the State soldiers could not see their foes, as the latter were in

ambush. The result was that they were just mowed down by their opponents' guns."*

Speaking more particularly of atrocities incident to the collection of rubber in the western part of the Équateur district, near the junction of the Ubangi with the Congo, and around Lake Tumba or Mantumba, stretching towards the south-east, Mr. Murphy averred: "I have seen these things done, and have remonstrated with the State in the years 1888, 1889, and 1894, but never got satisfaction. I have been in the interior and have seen the ravages made by the State in pursuit of this iniquitous trade. In one place I stood by the side of the river and heard a little boy describe how he had seen the Belgians shoot people for not fetching rubber, and at the same time he pointed to the flagstaff to which the poor victims had been tied, and which still bore the bullet and blood marks. Let me give an incident to show how this unrighteous trade affects the people. One day a State corporal, who was in charge of the post of Solifa, was going round the town collecting rubber. Meeting a poor woman whose husband was away fishing, he asked, 'Where is your husband?' She answered by pointing to the river. He then asked, 'Where is his rubber?' She answered, 'It is ready for you.' Whereupon he said, 'You lie,' and, lifting up his gun, shot her dead. Shortly afterwards the husband returned and was told of the murder of his wife. He went straight to the corporal, taking with him his rubber, and asked why he had shot his wife. The wretched man then raised his gun and killed the corporal. The soldiers ran away to the headquarters of the State, and made representations of the case, with the result that the commissary sent a large force to support the authority of the soldiers; the town was looted, burnt, and many people were killed and wounded." Again, "In November last (1894) there was heavy fighting on the Bosira, because the people refused to give rubber,

* A report by Reuter's Agency, published in the *Times* and other papers of 18th November, 1895.

and I was told upon the authority of a State officer that no less than 1,800 people were killed. Upon another occasion in the same month some soldiers ran away from a State steamer, and, it was said, went to the town of Bombumba. The officer sent a message telling the chief of the town to give them up. He answered that he could not, as the fugitives had not been in his town. The officer sent the messenger a second time with the order, 'Come to me at once, or war in the morning.' The next morning the old chief went to meet the Belgians and was attacked without provocation. He himself was wounded, his wife was killed before his eyes, and her head cut off in order that they might possess the brass necklet that she wore. Twenty-four of the chief's people were also killed and all for the paltry reason given above. Again, the people of Lake Mantumba ran away on account of the cruelty of the State, and the latter sent some soldiers in charge of a coloured corporal to treat with them and induce them to return. On the way the troops met a canoe containing seven of the fugitives. Under some paltry pretext they made the people land, shot them, cut off their hands and took them to the commissary. The Mantumba people complained to the missionary at Irebu, and he went down to see if the story was true. He ascertained the case to be just as they had narrated, and found that one of the seven was a little girl, who was not quite dead. The child recovered, and she lives to-day, the stump of the handless arm witnessing against this horrible practice. These are only a few things of many that have taken place in one district."*

"Some radical change in government," Mr. Murphy insisted, "must take place before there can be any hope of prosperity. It may well be supposed that the country is in a disturbed state. The people of the district of Lake Mantumba, of Irebu, and Lokolela, and all the Mobangi towns, have crossed over to the French side. The French

* *Times*, 18th November, 1895.

treat them kindly and are glad to get people. They did not run away without great provocation, for it meant starvation to them, all their gardens and their homes being upon the State side. Going over to the French side meant that they would become homeless and hungry wanderers. Even then the State could not leave them in peace; they heard that they came over at night to their old homes to get food, and they stationed canoes and lay in wait for them, with orders that the soldiers should shoot as many as they caught; and to my knowledge they shot seven people in one night. The State is strong enough to-day to do these things because the people lack unity. They have no leaders, no common sense, and no weapons to fight. Their condition is indeed deplorable, and needs our sympathy, as well as all that European public opinion can do to secure for them the blessings of a righteous government under which they can live in peace. The white officers do not know the language of the people that they govern, and trust too much to their native soldiers, who are, as a rule, men belonging to a hostile tribe whose chief aim in life is to plunder. These men are sent out to fight very often without any responsible officer being with them with the result that many cruelties are perpetrated which might have been avoided. For instance, on 23rd December, 1893, the State sent down some canoes under cover of night to the town of Ikengo. The people were quietly sleeping in their beds when they heard a shot fired, and ran out to see what was the matter. Finding the soldiers had surrounded the town, their only thought was escape. As they raced out of their homes, men, women, and children, they were ruthlessly shot down. Their town was utterly destroyed, and is a ruin to this day. The only reason for this fight was that the people had failed to bring kwanga (food) to the State upon that one day. It is impossible for the Governor at Boma—four weeks' journey from Stanley Pool, which ought to be the real seat of Government—to manage his vast and unwieldy territory;

so the commissaries and petty governors of the interior districts have almost unlimited power. The officers of the State are young and inexperienced; they do not come out as colonists to develop the country, but in order that they may receive quick promotion, the Congo decoration, and, above all, to get money. Of course there are some noble exceptions, but it is only the few who have an interest in the country and the well-being of the people. I have been told by naval and other officers of the State that a certain sum per head is paid by the Government to the commissaries of districts from which slaves are received, and to naval officers who bring them into camp. These wretched slaves soon find that they have only changed masters." "The rubber question," said Mr. Murphy, in conclusion, "is accountable for most of the horrors perpetrated in the Congo. It has reduced the people to a state of utter despair. Each town in the district is forced to bring a certain quantity to the headquarters of the commissary every Sunday. It is collected by force; the soldiers drive the people into the bush; if they will not go they are shot down, their left hands being cut off and taken as trophies to the commissary. The soldiers do not care whom they shoot down, and they most often shoot poor helpless women and harmless children. These hands—the hands of men, women, and children—are placed in rows before the commissary, who counts them to see the soldiers have not wasted the cartridges. The commissary is paid a commission of about a penny per pound upon all the rubber he gets; it is therefore to his interest to get as much as he can."*

Mr. Sjöblom's Testimony.

To the same effect, but more detailed, and therefore more convincing, was the testimony given by the Rev. E. V. Sjöblom, a Swedish missionary, and one of Mr. Murphy's colleagues of the American Baptist Missionary Union, at a meeting in London, convened for the purpose

* *Times*, 18th November, 1895.

by the Aborigines Protection Society, on 12th May, 1897. Mr. Sjöblom was then passing through England, apparently almost a dying man, for rest in his own country, where happily his health was so far restored that he was able in the following year to renew his labours in Congoland. When he made the statement he spoke with broken voice, but intense earnestness, in simple language, that left none of his hearers in doubt as to the absolute truthfulness with which he recounted the experiences of five years' residence in the Équateur district, and especially of events in the course of 1895.*

In general explanation of the system of rubber-collecting adopted not only in the portion of the Équateur district in which he had been working, but elsewhere as well, Mr. Sjöblom said: "The natives in inland towns are, as a matter of custom, asked whether they are willing to gather india-rubber. The question put to them is not, 'Will you live at peace together? Will you acknowledge the Congo Government?' It is, 'Will you work india-rubber?' Well, many of the people are killed, and they try suddenly to disband, and refuse to bring the india-rubber. Then war is declared. The soldiers are sent in different directions. The people in the towns are attacked, and when they are running away into the forest, and try to hide themselves, and save their lives, they are found out by the soldiers. Then their gardens of rice are destroyed, and their supplies taken. Their plantains are cut down while they are young and not in fruit, and often their huts are burnt, and, of course, everything of value is taken. Within my own knowledge forty-five villages were altogether burnt down. I say altogether, because there were many others partly burnt down. I passed through twenty-eight abandoned villages. The natives had left their places to go further

* The extracts here given are from a verbatim report of Mr. Sjöblom's address, published in the *Aborigines' Friend* for July, 1897 (pp. 214-220), with a few additions from an interview with him issued on the following day by Reuter's Agency. Though Mr. Sjöblom spoke fluent English, some foreign idioms are noticeable in his language.

inland. In order to separate themselves from the white men they go part of the way down the river, or else they cross the river into French territory. Sometimes the natives are obliged to pay a large indemnity. The chiefs often have to pay with brass wire and slaves, and if the slaves do not make up the amount their wives are sold to pay. I was told that by a Belgian officer. Native sentinels"—who, of course, are the sentries referred to by Consul Pickersgill—"are placed in the villages. The sentinels see that the other natives work. They are forced to build large houses for these sentinels, and have to leave their places and try to find other places further away. The sentinels themselves have told me this. I have been in the towns and seen it myself. In the morning the sentinels will go to and fro in the towns to see that no man stays behind. Only a few slaves are allowed to stay at home besides the women and children. Often they say that they have been told by a commissary that if they saw a man staying behind in the village they must shoot him.

"I will give you," Mr. Sjöblom continued, "an instance of a man I saw shot right before my eyes. In one of my inland journeys, when I had gone a little further, perhaps, than the commissary expected me to go, I saw something that perhaps he would not have liked me to see. It was at a town called Ibera, one of the cannibal towns to which no white man had ever been before. I reached it at sunset, after the natives had returned from the various places in which they had been looking for india-rubber. They gathered together in a great crowd, being curious to see a white man. Besides, they had heard I had some good news to tell them, which came through the Gospel. When that large crowd gathered, and I was just ready to preach, the sentinels rushed in among them to seize an old man. They dragged him aside a little from the crowd, and the sentinel in charge came to me and said, 'I want to shoot this man, because he has been in the river fishing to-day. He has not been on the river for india-rubber.' I told him,

'I have not authority to stop you, because I have nothing to do with these palavers, but the people are here to hear what I have to say to them, and I don't want you to do it before my eyes.' He said, 'All right, I will keep him in bounds then until to-morrow morning when you have gone. Then I will kill him.' But a few minutes afterwards the sentinel came in a rage to the man and shot him right before my eyes. Then he charged his rifle again and pointed it at the others, who all rushed away like chaff before the wind. He told a little boy, eight or nine years of age, to go and cut off the right hand of the man who had been shot. The man was not quite dead, and when he felt the knife he tried to drag his hand away. The boy, after some labour, cut the hand off and laid it by a fallen tree. A little later this hand was put on a fire to smoke before being sent to the commissary.

"All except the old chiefs, &c., are forced to go away and work rubber. It is very difficult for the natives to get it. It has been difficult from the very beginning. They have to wade in marshes. I have seen them often when they passed. They have knives in their hands, and they cut until the sap drops, drop by drop, and they stand in the water. It is difficult for them to work close to their own towns, but as they have to bring a large amount they have to cut the trees constantly until they dry up. Then they go to another place, and by-and-by they will have to go still further inland, where the State is not yet fighting the natives, and they have to stay away many days at a time. The sentinel told me that the natives there are not able to carry any food with them, and it often happens that they stay away for days at a time and that they die in the marshes of fainting and starvation. The sentinels are from the wildest tribes. They were wild already, but when they get to this work they are many times worse. They are really small kings in the towns, and they often kill the people for the sake of india-rubber. They often rob, and steal, and plunder, and take whatever they can get hold of.

At the beginning, when I saw that, I told the commissary about it, but he turned in anger on me and, in the presence of the soldiers, said that he would expel me from the town if I meddled with matters of that kind any more.

"If the rubber does not reach the full amount required, the sentinels attack the natives. They kill some and bring the hands to the commissary. Others are brought to the commissary as prisoners. Hundreds are constantly taken down in large steamers. Lying in the steamers there are the dead bodies of prisoners who are being taken down to the coast. At the beginning they came with their smoked hands. The sentinels, or else the boys in attendance on them, put these hands on a little kiln, and after they had been smoked, they by-and-by put them on the top of the rubber baskets. I have on many occasions seen this done.

"At one time I went to an inland lake several miles wide; the natives told me I was the first white man who had ever seen it. Under the shadow of palms and plantain I saw the villages. I saw somebody coming alone and looking at what was going on. As he met me, he said: 'What am I to do? The rubber does not reach a large amount, some of the people have run away, and those who are left refuse to bring the full amount.' And then he told me the amount these people had to bring. The commissaries lower down the river do not know how many people there are in a village. They put on a small village as large an amount as on a big village. In this case it was impossible for the people to collect the required amount. From this village I went on to another, where I met a man who pointed to a basket, and said to me, 'Look, I have only two hands.' He meant there were not enough to make up for the rubber he had not brought. He had several prisoners tied to the trees. They were waiting to be taken away. When I came back some of the villages were in an uproar. The people were leaving their homes and rushing to the forest. When I reached the river I turned round and saw that the people had large hammocks, in which

they were gathering the rubber to be taken to the commissary. I also saw smoked hands, and the prisoners waiting to be taken down to the commissary.

"That is only one of the places in which these practices occur. There is a small island in a stream at Lake Mantumba. The people had not been able to bring the full amount of rubber. The officers with some soldiers went along there. Several of the natives were killed. I saw the dead bodies floating on the lake with the right hands off, and the officer told me when I came back why they had been killed. It was for the rubber. In fact, the officers have always freely told me about the many who were killed, and always in connection with india-rubber. In one village which I passed through, I saw two or three men on the wayside quite recently killed—about an hour before. The sentinel, who had to oversee the gathering of the rubber, told me they had killed the men because they had not brought the rubber. When I crossed the stream, I saw some dead bodies hanging down from branches in the water. As I turned my face away at the horrible sight, one of the native corporals who was following us down, said, 'Oh, that is nothing, a few days ago I returned from a fight, and I brought the white man 160 hands, and they are thrown in the river.'

"At Lake Mantumba, later on in 1895, the natives, after they had begun to get india-rubber close to the lake, found hostile tribes with poisoned arrows. The natives could not get far enough for their india-rubber. Two or three days after a fight a dead mother was found with two of her children. The mother was shot and the right hand was taken off. On one side was the elder child, also shot, and the right hand also taken off. On the other side was the younger child, with the right hand cut off; but the child, still living, was resting against the dead mother's breast. This dark picture was seen by four other missionaries. I myself saw the child. The natives had begun to cut off the left hand, but, seeing their mistake, they left it and cut off the right

hand instead. If such punishment is, in any case, right, why not try to find out those who are really guilty, and who failed to gather the full amount of rubber? But to attack not only one village, but a whole set of villages, because one or two have failed to give their amount—that is one of the things we object to. The soldiers are sent out to attack a whole village, instead of finding and punishing the guilty, if any are guilty. At the end of 1895, the commissary—all the people were gathering the rubber—said he had often told the sentinels not to kill the people. But on 14th December a sentinel passed our mission station and a woman accompanied him, carrying a basket of hands. Mr. and Mrs. Banks, besides myself, went down the road, and they told the sentinel to put the hands on the road that they might count them. We counted eighteen right hands smoked, and from the size of the hands we could judge that they belonged to men, women, and children. We could not understand why these hands had been collected, as the commissary had given orders that no more natives were to be killed for their hands. On my last journey I discovered the secret. One Monday night, a sentinel who had just returned from the commissary, said to me, 'What are the sentinels to do? When all the people are gathered together, the commissary openly tells us not to kill any more people, but when the people have gone he tells us privately that if they do not bring plenty of india-rubber we must kill some, but not bring the hands to him.' Some sentinels, he told me, had been put in chains because they killed some natives who happened to be near a mission station; but it was only because he thought it might become known that the commissary, to justify himself, had put the men in chains. I said to the sentinel, 'You should obey the first command, never to kill any more.' 'The people,' he answered, 'unless they are frightened, do not bring in the rubber, and then the commissary flogs us with the hippopotamus hide, or else he puts us in chains, or sends us to Boma.' The sentinel

added that the commissary induced him to hide cruelty while letting it go on, and to do this in such a way that he might be justified, in case it should become known and an investigation should be made. In such a case the commissary could say, 'Why, I told him openly not to kill any more,' and he might put the blame on the soldier to justify himself, though the blame and the punishment in all its force ought to have been put on himself, after he had done such a terrible act in order to disguise or mislead justice. If the sentinels were puzzled about this message, what would the natives be?

"One important fact happened on the Saturday before the sentinel told me about it. The chief informed the sentinel that he would report to the commissary that the sentinel had killed his father. But the sentinel said, 'What could you do to me? I would simply tell the commissary that you had not brought rubber, and then he would put you in chains instead of me.' 'Oh,' said the chief, 'you have killed my father for nothing, but I will not go with you to the commissary'; and then he went away from the village, from the place where the rubber was placed. But the sentinel caught the chief. He called some sentinels from other villages, and they forced him along and threw him down, some holding down the head, some the arms, and some other parts of the body, and they flogged him until the blood streamed down his back. Then they told the chief to stop in the camp. They pushed him, and a soldier took his gun and levelled it close to the chief's heart. The chief stood shivering with fear, and the sentinel said, 'I can kill you if I like.'

"I have seen extracts from letters in which the writers have freely told about hundreds being killed, about hundreds of hands being brought by the sentinels, about hundreds of slaves being taken; and one of the State officials said to a resident agent, 'I have two hundred slaves here; do you want some?' Another agent told me that he had himself seen a State officer at one of the out-

posts pay a certain number of brass rods to the soldiers for a number of hands they had brought. One of the soldiers told me the same. That was about the time I saw the native killed before my own eyes. The soldier said, 'Don't take this to heart so much. They kill us if we do not bring rubber. The commissary has promised us if we bring plenty of hands he will shorten our service. I have brought in plenty of hands already, and I expect my time of service will soon be finished.'"

Of ill-treatment of natives not directly incident to rubber-collecting Mr. Sjöblom gave some illustrations. "There is," he said, "a lot of labour besides. The people are compelled to bring in a certain amount of fish and other things. It is not only on a Sunday that they bring their fish and rubber, but they have to bring it, according to the new orders, sometimes every second, sometimes every third or fourth day. Whenever they are told to do anything they must do it, as the soldiers order them. The fish they often buy themselves, because all of them are not fishermen. Some villagers do not fish at all. They buy a bundle of fish, and pay five brass rods for it. When the fish is scarce they pay fifteen brass rods. When they hand it in perhaps they receive only one brass rod for a bundle. I have seen that over and over again. In doing this, the commissaries say they buy the fish and do not take it for nothing. Again, people about the towns are often told to bring a certain number of bamboos from each village. Perhaps a man has to go far inland, or to cross to the other side of the river, and to spend a whole day in getting a big bundle of bamboos. Then the following day he has to bring it to the commissary, and when he brings a large bundle he gets one brass rod for two days' labour. It is the same with many other things. They are told to bring a kind of cane with which they make baskets to take the rubber down to Boma, and also to make the baskets for the coffee plantations. The women are often called out to cut grass for nothing."

The Governor-General's Action.

In the early part of 1895 Mr. Sjöblom had put forward a statement of some of the cruelties he had seen, and this was submitted by him to M. De Lancker, one of the Congo State's judges, who was sent up in February, 1896, to make investigations as to the truth of the allegations by Mr. Murphy which had been published in the European newspapers of the previous November, and which had caused great annoyance to Governor-General Wahis. Mr. Sjöblom was consequently summoned as a witness at Judge De Lancker's inquiry into Mr. Murphy's charges, and his evidence thereon, supplemented by his own complaints, appears to have increased the Governor-General's indignation. In the course of a journey up the river, M. Wahis called at Équateurville in June, 1896, and sent for Mr. Banks—the other American missionary, and chief of the group, who had joined in the complaints—as well as for Mr. Sjöblom, to be talked to on the subject. According to the latter's report of the interview, he said, "'It has been proved by the investigations that what Mr. Murphy told in his recent article was false.' 'Oh,' I said—I looked a little doubtful. Then he said, 'About this affair at Bomabumba, for instance: Mr. Murphy said more than twenty people had been killed. That was impossible, because only four soldiers and guns were sent down. They received ten cartridges and brought back seven.' I said, 'Oh, there must be some mistake about that. The soldiers passed down at six o'clock in the morning. When they were going across I saw eight soldiers with guns, and several were discharging their guns. The village is very close to our station, and there were more than twenty shots fired.' He did not try to give another instance about the investigation, and what Mr. Murphy had said. But he took the charges which had been made as to what I had seen, and he held them in his hand when he began to cross-question me. He tried in every possible way to entangle me, and, if an English word had two different meanings, he

would take the meaning that suited him, and point to different documents as though he would say, 'You contradict these?' I said, 'Excuse me, I have a right to put the meaning as I like.' Then he went on to something else, and so he went on the whole afternoon. At last he said, 'Yes, you may have seen all these things that you have stated, but nothing is proved.' I said, 'It is not my fault.' When the judge had finished with me he said he could not come down to the mission station to the men who had witnessed this and the other matters stated to him. I put the names down on the list and sent them all up to Coquilhatville. The first day the commissary called his soldiers, put a cartridge in a gun and pointed it to the witnesses. The next day the witnesses would not go. They were afraid to go.' I said to the Governor, 'It is not my fault that it is not proved,' and he jumped up and said, 'You make these charges.' I said, 'Excuse me, I make no charges. This is only an explanation first given by witnesses to me. But they were afraid to come the following day to tell the story now repeated by me. No witnesses were heard.' On the following day," Mr. Sjöblom continued, "I again saw the Governor. The sun was setting, and he said, 'I will come down, and see you at your station next Sunday afternoon.' He came down, and he began again. During the Saturday I had already taken down the names of witnesses to the different charges. I drew the list from my pocket and asked, 'When would it be convenient for me to prove my charges?' He said, 'What do you want?' I answered, 'I heard from you that my charges were not proved, and I want to prove them. I only ask when it will be convenient.' He replied, 'I don't want to hear any witnesses. The man has left the country.' I said, 'Yes, the man has left the country, but my charge is disputed, and I contend that my witnesses should be heard.' He said, 'Well, if you continue to demand investigation in these matters, we will make a charge against you. The natives say that you on your inland journeys have

told them not to bring india-rubber to the State. If you continue to demand investigation we will take up a case against you.' I said, 'I never did such a thing. I have been told again and again not to listen to the natives, because they tell you lies, and now you threaten me with a charge founded on native lies.' He said, 'Well, if you go on with this, we will make these charges against you. That means five years' imprisonment.' Then he suddenly turned the conversation to something else, and I saw I could not be heard. I had tried to prove my facts, and I kept quiet. Very soon afterwards he took his departure."

At an interview following the meeting of the Aborigines Protection Society, Mr. Sjöblom referred to what he called "an even more glaring instance of Congo barbarity and maladministration," which brought upon him and Mr. Banks another visit from the Governor-General. "Towards the end of last year," that is, in October, 1896, he reported, "a force of State soldiers, at the order of the commissary of the district, entered the village of Mandaka Vagigo, near my station, and seeing the natives run away as usual at their approach, held out a quantity of the brass rods with which they trade, indicating that they were not there to fight, but to buy food. Seeing their show of peaceful intentions, the natives returned, and commenced to prepare food. Meanwhile a portion of the troops were sent down to the other end of the village; the natives were surrounded; the State soldiers opened fire upon them, and about fifty were killed. This being reported to us by soldiers and natives, Mr. Banks rode out to inquire into it. He himself counted twenty or thirty dead bodies, and the natives wanted him to go into the bush, where they said more were lying. Mr. Banks, having seen the bodies in the village, and hearing of the hands that had been cut off, concluded that he had ample proof without going into the bush. He seemed surprised that the hands had not been sent to the State station to be counted, but was told that it was not necessary to show them to the State officer, as they were

counted by a native sergeant. A few days later Governor Wahis, on his return down the river, called in at our station and asked Mr. Banks if any further atrocities had taken place since his last visit. Mr. Banks detailed what he had heard, and M. Wahis answered that it was impossible. He then told the Governor that he had seen it himself, whereupon M. Wahis summoned the commandant in charge—the officer who had ordered the raid had already gone elsewhere—and asked him in French if the story were true. The Belgian officer assured M. Wahis that it was, but the latter, thinking Mr. Banks did not understand French, said, 'After all, you may have seen this; but you have no witnesses.' 'Oh,' said Mr. Banks, 'I can call the commandant, who has just told you that it is true.' M. Wahis then tried to minimise the matter, when, to his great surprise, Mr. Banks added, 'In any case, I have, at his own request, furnished to the British Consul, who passed through here lately, a signed statement concerning it.' M. Wahis rose from his chair, saying, 'Oh, then, it is all over Europe!' Then, for the first time, he said that the responsible commissary must be punished. Some time after the Governor's departure we were surprised to hear that the guilty officer had been sentenced to five years' imprisonment. As the officer was all this time waging warfare in the interior, we failed to understand what it meant. We afterwards learnt that he had been sentenced to remain for five years on the Congo without furlough. These cases are sufficient to show the working of the new regulations on the Congo."*

The Value of the Natives Protection Commission.

Mr. Sjöblom's experiences were of earlier date than the appointment of the so-called Natives Protection Commission in September, 1896; but before he left the country for a long rest in March, 1897, he was able to recognise the worthlessness of this pretence of philanthropy. "The appointment of the Commission,"

* *Times*, 14th May, 1897.

he stated plainly, "was only for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of people at home. I come from a large and important district in the far interior, so I cannot, from personal observation, tell you of what has gone on on the lower river, although I believe that some slight attempt was made at first on the main river, by the Governor, to remedy matters. I can only say that generally, and in my own district particularly, things are as bad as ever. None of the members of the Commission is able to see very much of the real state of things. In the first place they are in positions where there is least need of their services. They are tied to their own districts to a large extent. Moreover, the State authorities have ample opportunity for taking care that the worst cases shall not come under their notice. A few cases have been dealt with, owing to the energetic representations of missionaries or others; but, as a whole, there is a general indisposition either to hear evidence on the subject of the brutal treatment of the people, or to deal effectually with it. Much more might be said on this subject; but I will only add that the country is rapidly becoming depopulated by this misgovernment, and impoverished instead of benefited, that people are enslaved instead of being freed from slavery, and that this false policy and cruel treatment create hatred and distrust, and thus on every hand fresh obstacles are added to the progress of true civilisation. Something must be done soon, and done effectually, if Europe is to free herself from bloodguiltiness in reference to these downtrodden people. May the day speedily come when the question will cease to be asked, with a curse, 'Why did the white man ever find his way to my country?'" *

English Protests and Official Contradictions.

The revelations of Mr. Sjöblom in May, 1897, amplifying those of Mr. Murphy in November, 1895, aroused considerable interest in Europe, especially as public attention had been called to the whole question of Congo

* *Times*, 14th May, 1897.

misrule in an important debate which Sir Charles Dilke raised in the House of Commons on 2nd April, 1897, and by a scarcely less important meeting convened by the Aborigines Protection Society on the following 7th April over which Mr. Leonard Courtney presided, and at which the principal speakers were Mr. John Morley and Sir Charles Dilke.* In the hope of allaying this agitation a lengthy communication was made to the Belgian press by M. Van Eetvelde, the principal Secretary of the Congo State, who declared that "its object is to create difficulties for the Congo State, to discredit it by magnifying isolated facts, and, under cover of philanthropy, to prepare the way for the financial and territorial ambitions which mask themselves behind this campaign," but who attempted no justification at all of his *tu quoque* assertion, and, in answer to the specific charges against the agents of the State, offered no more than vague generalisations and appeals to its pompous professions of disinterestedness and humane intentions.† Before that, moreover, M. Jules Houdret, as Consul-General in London for the Congo State, had in similar terms denounced, in the *Times* of 10th April, the attempt to procure some approach towards just treatment of Congo natives. In the correspondence that ensued it devolved on me, with support from Sir Charles Dilke and others, to rebut official contradictions and denials which became more authoritative when Governor-General Wahis, who in the interval had arrived in Europe on a visit, took part in the controversy. Without reproducing these lengthy assertions and counter-assertions, it may be sufficient to quote here the cautious remarks of the *Times* that, on the questions at issue, M. Wahis's defence

* On this occasion, referring to the Anglo-Congolese Convention of 12th May, 1894, granting to King Leopold a lease of "the Lado *enclave*" or "le territoire pris à bail," which was agreed to by Earl Rosebery's Cabinet, Mr. Morley, who had been a member of that Cabinet, frankly remarked, "I can only say that, in the light of what I now know, it seems to me perfectly clear that in making this lease we made a very great mistake."

† *L'Étoile Belge*, 23rd May, 1897.

is "hardly calculated to produce the effect he desires," and "will convince few who are not convinced already," and that "we are quite ready to acknowledge the enormous difficulty of these African problems, particularly as they present themselves to a relatively poor State, but we cannot say that there is yet evidence that the Congo State has met them with even moderate success."*

Mr. Sjöblom's Justification.

One outcome of the controversy, and perhaps its most significant result, though of minor importance in comparison with the fate of the entire native population of Congoland which was involved in it, was the refutation of the Governor-General's impeachment of Mr. Sjöblom, whose illness necessarily delayed his participation in the dispute he had in part brought about. In reply to Mr. Sjöblom's charges M. Wahis took shelter under evasive generalities, such as that "the mutilation of corpses is a custom that exists and has existed in almost every part of Africa (a warrior brings in hands and heads as a proof of his valour)"; that if, in an egregious instance, "the inhabitants resisted and lost a certain number of slain, the repression was legitimate in itself," although, "contrary to the instructions, a mistake was made in giving the command to a black sergeant"; and that "in no country is war made without devastations—when war is raging it is not in the Congo only that it sometimes assumes a character which our civilisation reproves." He had but prevarication to offer, however, with reference to his threat of penal servitude to Mr. Sjöblom if the latter proceeded in his charges against State officials. "I was brought to declare to him," was M. Wahis's final admission, "that, if I constantly relied like himself upon the word of the natives, I ought to summon him before a council of war for having at different times incited inhabitants to refuse to pay the taxes." But he added that it was by a subordinate, not

* *Times*, 10th, 12th, 16th, and 26th April; 17th, 26th, and 31st May; 7th, 9th, 17th, and 21st June, 1897.

by himself, that the actual threat was uttered, seeing that "Judge Dr. Hegère, who was present at our interview, expressed his opinion that this fact might make him liable to five years' penal servitude."*

In the course of the controversy the Governor-General had referred to a letter from Mr. Grenfell, the Protestant member of the new Natives Protection Commission, in assumed refutation of one of Mr. Sjöblom's allegations. Mr. Sjöblom was able to quote the following from Mr. Grenfell, dated 13th February, 1897: "I am very sorry to learn that my letter to Baron Dhanis of about a year ago has been used to throw discredit upon your communication to the Press in which you detail some of the incidents of your experience at Bolengi"—the name of the mission station—"and inland from that place. If I had seen your letter before I wrote to Baron Dhanis, I should certainly have written differently from what I did, for I could not take the same exception to your facts that I felt justified in taking to the previously-published statements. So far as I am aware, the State has not seriously denied the truth of the statements you made in the letters referred to, and I imagine it is owing very largely to the impression caused by them that the recent energetic action of his Excellency the Governor-General may be traced, and I think you may congratulate yourself for having very effectively discharged a very onerous responsibility and for having materially contributed to the commencement of a new and better *régime*."†

The new *régime* may for a time have been somewhat better than the old as regards the treatment of natives; but, as we shall see, abuses continued, and soon became more appalling than ever.

* *Times*, 31st May and 23rd September, 1897.
† *Ibid.*, 10th September, 1897.

CHAPTER XI.

Raids and Rebellions [1895–1899].

The native risings in the Équateur district, of which Mr. Glave saw something and heard more on his passage down the Congo, were followed in the same year by graver disturbances further south, in the Luluaba district and elsewhere. Before reviewing these troubles, however, mention must be made of proceedings in the north, one notable incident in which greatly increased the Congo State's difficulties in the attempted suppression of rebellion.

The Dhanis and Chaltin Expedition.

The questionable success of the Van Kerckhoven expedition, after the death of its leader, in reaching the Nile valley in October, 1892, procured recognition by the French and British Governments of the State's claim to supremacy over the Ubangi and Welle districts and the Lado *enclave*, as delimited by the Franco-Congolese Convention of August, 1894. It also resulted in desperate efforts not only to make effective the State's supremacy in those districts, but in addition, and in spite of the convention, to obtain foothold yet further north. Necessity for action of some sort arose out of the refusal of the Niam-Niam, on both sides of the Upper Welle, to consider themselves conquered, and, it was alleged, out of the encroachments of the Mahdists from the Bahr-el-Ghazal country of which they were in possession. At Mundu, in the far east, and near to the Lado *enclave*, a so-called Dervish force was defeated by Captains Delanghe and Bonvallet in March, 1894, though in that encounter, or immediately after it, the latter officer and some of his men were killed by Mbili, the Niam-Niam sultan of the district. Mbili was punished, and the Dervishes were again repulsed, by Captains

Francqui and Christiaens in the following December, and in the interval small victories had been won towards the west, on the Darfur frontier, by Lieutenants Gerard and Donckier. But a graver affair was the slaughter of Captain Janssens and about sixty of his troops by Ndoruma, another Niam-Niam sultan, in February, 1895.

It was ostensibly with a view to the establishment of the State's authority in its assumed territory, and at the same time to the rendering of some assistance to the Anglo-Egyptian expedition against the Mahdists which was about to be entered upon, that in November, 1895, Baron Dhanis was sent back to the Congo, where already Captain Chaltin was getting ready to co-operate with him. Complications nearer the centre of Congo State administration, however, appear to have delayed the commencement of operations, and subsequent complications brought about results which had not been contemplated.

The Welle Campaign.

Captain Chaltin arrived with a strong force at Niampara, on the Upper Welle, and, making it the base of a campaign against the turbulent Niam-Niam, in February, 1896, he proceeded to demolish Mbili's power. Mbili went out to meet the invaders, and, with a chivalry almost peculiar to African savages, sent notice that he intended to attack them, as he did, on 17th March. Thereby he hastened his overthrow. After a hot encounter nearly all his followers were either killed or dispersed, and he had to make his escape, accompanied only by a few sturdy warriors. Ndoruma was next attacked, and as signally defeated after two battles, in the first of which the forces were commanded by his brother Mbima, while in the second he was himself engaged. Having thus made himself temporarily master of the situation, Captain Chaltin spent several months in setting up forts and garrisons, including one at Dongu, in the centre of what is now the Welle district, provided with six guns and accommodation for 800 soldiers, and another at Dirfi, on the edge of the Lado *enclave*.

In the meanwhile Baron Dhanis was making for the larger undertaking such preparations as the disturbances in the Équateur, Lualaba, and other districts allowed. He was at Stanley Falls in June, 1896, and there and thereabouts he appears to have recruited and roughly trained a large number of native troops, in addition to the Batetela and Manyema for whom he waited until their arrival from Kabambare, the great fighting depôt in the south.

The Niam-Niam Mutiny.

In September, 1896, he sent forward, under Captain Leroi, three battalions, each about 1,000 strong, commanded by Captains Mathieu, Julien, and Doorme, and this force, marching eastward through Avakubi, on the Ituri, to Kavali, on Lake Albert Edward, and thence due north, reached Dirfi on 12th February, 1897. Two days later a mutiny broke out among the native soldiers and mercenaries, as to which the most detailed information is from M. Achte, a French member of the White Fathers Mission, who for a short time in April was a captive in the rebels' hands.

According to this missionary's account, the trouble began, not among the Batetela and Manyema brought up by Leroi, but among the Niam-Niam of Niampara, who must have been recruited by Chaltin or his subordinates, and the immediate occasion was an order given by one of the Belgian officers that a Niampara soldier should, for some unnamed offence, receive a hundred lashes with the hippopotamus-hide whip. "Enraged at this," it is added, "the Niampara chiefs, Kandoro, Ladiki, and Kalukula, gave out the watchword 'mutiny,' in order to escape from the rod of the Dervishes and the bludgeon and rope of the Belgians, and to avenge their countrymen, who had been flogged and shot down for years. When night came, two officers fell off their seats, shot through the heart, five others were shot down, and, thanks to the darkness, two escaped. Everything was plundered." Foremost among

the slain was Captain Leroi, whose advance guard of about 3,000 was thus broken up.*

Baron Dhanis was in no way personally responsible for this outbreak; and when he arrived at Dirfi, if he got so far, he appears to have found it deserted. The rebels, having chosen as their "king" Mlumba, a Manyema chief, had wandered due south for nearly 200 miles, finding victims and sympathisers on the way, before they were overtaken by Dhanis, with his army of 4,000 or more, chiefly Manyema, at Ekwanga, near the source of the Ituri, on 18th March. Then a second and greater mutiny broke out. "For three years," Mlumba said to the White Father, "I had stored up in my heart hatred for the Belgians. When I saw Dhanis, face to face with my mutinous countrymen, I trembled with joy; the moment had come for liberty and revenge. Dhanis had, in the evening, formed his army in rank and file, and placed sentinels. The Europeans, sure of their victory on the following day, slept. Towards two in the morning the mutineers, who had already come to an understanding with the Manyema in Dhanis's camp, were noticed by the sentinels and shot at. General firing began, and the Belgians rushed out of their tents to give orders. But their whole camp was in revolt. When the sun rose, one saw several hundred corpses of black soldiers and seven dead Belgians. All the other Belgians fled, only escaping with their lives." Dhanis's own rifle, eighteen guns, with ammunition and all the other supplies, as well as the white men's tents and kits, were captured.

Baron Dhanis and his deputies were, as we shall see, occupied for four years in vain attempts to crush the rebellion which has lasted to this day, and Captain Chaltin

* M. Achte's information was published in Berlin, and extensively reproduced in the English and other papers, in December, 1897. As in earlier chapters, I do not trouble the reader with reference to my authorities for each item in facts briefly summarised. Such scanty official reports as have been printed being shamelessly misleading, I have had to correct and supplement them by as careful examination as I could make of the numerous statements appearing in current newspapers and other publications.

had to carry on the Nile expedition without his supervision or assistance.

Captain Chaltin's Operations.

With a force of about 800 troops, having a white officer over each hundred or so, a contingent of some 500 Niam-Niam under their own chiefs, Renzi and Basuka, and carriers and others who swelled the total to nearly 2,000, Captain Chaltin had left Dongu on 14th December, 1896, two months before the mutiny of Leroi's party. On 1st January, 1897, he was at Surur, the last point reached by Van Kerckhoven, in whose memory it has been renamed Van Kerckhovenville, and, going out of his way to "occupy" part of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, he reached Kaduruma, one of its chief towns, on 13th January. There, as he wrote in his official report, "we were surprised at the sight of the plantations, a veritable ocean of sorghum, extending all around as far as the horizon; what wealth!" Thence he hurried on to the Nile, which he sighted on 14th February, the day of Leroi's disaster, and after one pitched battle with about 2,000 Dervishes, which had been preceded by a few skirmishes, he took possession of Rejaf on 17th February. Since then, with Lado for the centre of local administration, the "territoire pris à bail" has been more or less effectively controlled by the Congo State, with a nominal garrison of 3,000 troops and a gunboat on the Nile.

The Lado Occupation.

To the British Government this arrangement appears to have been for the most part satisfactory, as it purported to be helpful to the Anglo-Egyptian reconquest of the Eastern Sudan, before and since the decisive battle of Omdurman on 2nd September, 1898. Much alarm was caused in England as well as in France by the raids into the Bahr-el-Ghazal, not only from Lado, under Captain Chaltin's successor, Captain Hanolet, but also from the Welle stations. English objectors, however, had no support from their Government, which was hampered by its unfortunate Convention of

March, 1894, with the Congo State; and French objectors were humoured by the considerable assistance that the State gave to M. Liotard, the Governor of French Ubangi, and to other organisers of French expeditions in the Nile direction, especially to Major Marchand in his temporary occupation of Fashoda concurrently with Lord Kitchener's capture of Omdurman.

The Batetela Mutiny.

It may be reasonably assumed that, had Baron Dhanis been able to follow up Captain Chaltin with the much larger force intended for miscellaneous raiding within and beyond the north-eastern boundary of the Congo State's territory, the proceedings there would have been far more important than those actually conducted, with the utmost possible secrecy. As it happened, Baron Dhanis had a task beyond his power in endeavouring to stamp out the rebellion started, or revived, by the Niam-Niam mutiny of February, 1897, with encouragement and vigorous co-operation from the two other great cannibal communities in eastern and southern Congoland, the Manyema and the Batetela.

Its Origin.

The origin of this trouble dates back to the lawless killing of Gongo Lutete at Gandu, on the Lomani, in September, 1893, after he had rendered all the service required from him in defeating the Arab masters of the country east of the Congo and Lualaba. "Gongo Lutete's bodyguard," according to Dr. Hinde, "consisted of about 600 men, who, as the only members of all his people in whom he could place trust, held special privileges. A day or two after the execution of Gongo these men, who were devoted to their chief, showed a disposition to avenge his death. For his own safety, and the greater security of the station, Lieutenant Scherlink despatched them to Lusambo, and from thence to Luluaburg, since it was thought that outside their own district they would be less likely to cause trouble. I arrived at Gandu from Nyangwe on the day on which they were ordered to leave, and, angry at their power being

broken, they vowed vengeance against the white men and the rest of Gongo's people, whom they had ruled with brutal severity. As they marched out of Gandu they fired on the townspeople, killing and wounding a few, and shouting through the streets that they would come back some day and would kill and eat every one they found there. Shortly after their arrival at Luluaburg they were enlisted as soldiers in the State service, and in this capacity distinguished themselves for intelligence, willingness, and pluck against a rebellious slave-raiding tribe in the Kasai district. Some two years later they revolted, and after murdering their officers at Luluaburg, marched through the country, killing white men and raiding natives, till eventually, having raised the whole country against the Government, they arrived at Gandu."*

That was near the middle of 1895, and the mutineers—numbering at first, it was stated, no more than 350, but armed with Albini rifles and with an ample store of cartridges, and winning recruits as they went—had sacked Gandu as well as Luluaburg, Kalinda, and other stations, and had on 9th October severely defeated a small force led against them by Lieutenant Gillian, before Captain Lothaire, not yet tried for the killing of Mr. Stokes, was able to march against them from Nyangwe. With 1,000 well-armed men Lothaire surprised and defeated them on 18th October, and on 11th November, after an engagement in which four Belgian officers lost their lives, a more important victory virtually brought the campaign to a close. Claiming that he had all but exterminated the remains of Gongo Lutete's bodyguard of picked Batetela, Lothaire was able to report that there was "no longer any shadow of danger to the State." There appears to have been a pause of nearly a year in open hostilities; but fresh risings between the Lualaba and Lomani watercourses compelled Captain Michaud to hurry to the scene with a large force from Kwango in November, 1896, and Governor-General Wahis

* 'The Fall of the Congo Arabs,' p. 285.

himself to bring up additional forces in the following January. After that, though the authorities resolved to adhere more strictly than previously to their rule that native troops should only be engaged in fighting with tribes alien to their own and at a distance from their homes, confidence in the Batetela was so far restored that large numbers of them were employed both in Leroi's and in Dhanis's portions of the force destined for crusading in the north.

Its Development.

There were at least 500 with Dhanis in March, 1897, when he overtook the mutineers who had wrecked Leroi's advance-guard in February, and to their presence was principally due the yet graver wrecking of his main army. In the turmoil his brother, Louis Dhanis, and several other Belgians were killed, and he could himself do no more than, with a few faithful blacks and the whites who had survived, escape to Avakubi, which he left Lieutenant Henry to defend while he went to Stanley Falls to organise a fresh army for pursuit of the insurgents, who were leisurely continuing their journey southward.

The mutineers had reached the Semliki valley, between Lake Albert Nyanza and Lake Albert Edward, and, if not actually within British territory, were on the borders of the Toru district of the British protectorate of Uganda when, on 20th April, M. Achte fell into their hands as he was making one of his missionary tours. Taken to the principal tent, where he saw many of the rebels wearing the uniform of European officers, most of his clothes and all his other property were taken from him, and he was threatened with death. "We have killed the Belgians who called us beasts, and who killed our chiefs and our brothers like goats," said his captors; "why should we not kill you?" But on M. Achte assuring them that he was not a Belgian, but a French priest, who had injured no black men, and on some of the women interceding for him, he was taken to Mlumba, the "king," who ordered that he

should be well treated, and who released him after eight days' detention. From Mlumba he learned that the intention was, before going south to Kabambare, to divide into two parties, one to stir up revolt in Toru and slaughter the English there, and the other to make as much havoc as possible in Belgian territory. This plan was so far acted upon that many of the insurgents did enter Toru, where they all but captured the British fort at Katwe, and helped to increase the disturbance that led to the mutiny of the Uganda Rifles a few months later, and whence they had to be expelled by Major Ternan, the acting Administrator of Uganda. But they were soon compelled to retire from this part of the country, and in a quarrel that ensued after their defeat at Katwe Mlumba was killed by one of his companions. On 12th June, moreover, Lieutenant Henry, arriving with 600 fighting men whom he had got together at Avakubi, joined another force under Captain Sannaes, with whose help he harried the insurgents until 15th July, when he was in a position to inflict on them a severe defeat. Killing about 400, he so disorganised the rest that, breaking up into separate bands, they wandered about in several directions, and for some while could do no more than provoke discontent wherever they showed themselves.

Its Sequels.

The disturbances, which are generally spoken of as the Batetela mutiny, continued or steadily followed one another from year to year, and have not yet been overcome; but by the middle of 1897 the particular grievance from which they had started appears to have worn itself out. Almost from the first, probably, the malcontents who rallied round the residue of Gongo Lutete's body-guard, and took prompting and guidance from it, outnumbered the pioneers. These pioneers were only the chief promoters of a revolt against Congo State tyranny from which they found plenty of victims wherever they went, and the wrongs complained of by the new recruits scarcely differed from those that the Batetela from Luluaburg, and originally from Gandu,

sought to avenge. The Manyema and kindred tribes, including the Bakumu, the Batoko, and other inhabitants of regions nearer to Stanley Falls, must have been more numerous than the actual Batetela in the risings of February and March, 1897, in the Niam-Niam country, and, if the Niam-Niam who immediately instigated those risings did not go far in the southern march of their fellow-insurgents and soon returned to keep alive the spirit of insurrection in their own neighbourhoods, their places were evidently taken, in ever increasing numbers, by fresh insurgents gathered from each locality that the rebel leaders visited. The leaders, as well as the rank and file, doubtless had nothing in common but desire for revenge and plunder. Tribal jealousies aggravated their quarrels, and they were easily dispersed after such "decisive victories" as the one in July, 1897, for which Lieutenant Henry was promoted and decorated. But the victories were ephemeral and decided nothing. The very lack of cohesion and corporate vitality among the insurgents, which made it easy to defeat and disperse them, made it as easy for them to come together again in new shapes, like the despised and incomplete organisms of some lower forms of animal life which their very inferiority renders it all the harder to destroy. The so-called Batetela mutineers, at any rate, however often and however severely stamped upon, could not be crushed out.

Leaving his subordinates to deal as they could with the insurgents on the road towards Kabambare, Baron Dhanis appears to have gone thither as soon as he found it convenient and to have concentrated his energies in attempted strengthening of its defences and those of Kasongo, in anticipation of the avowed design of the insurgents to capture them, with all their arsenals and armouries, and to make them the centre of a dominion at least as ambitious and powerful as that which had been overthrown under Dhanis's direction in 1893.

Kabambare was not attacked till November, 1898, and

no important fighting was reported till two months after Captain Henry's success near Lake Albert Edward. On 20th December, 1897, however, a rebel force was defeated by Captain Doorme at Biko on the Lova, only about 150 miles to the south-west of the earlier battlefield. By the following April the rebels were in great activity much nearer to Kabambare, on the west of the Rusi, the stream that connects Lake Kivu with Lake Tanganyika. There several engagements were fought with apparent advantage to the rebels. Notwithstanding alleged defeats in April and May, they contrived to push southwards in spite of all the resistance offered to them, and repeated desertions of State troops, after their Belgian officers had been killed, were admitted. On 17th June, 1898, a "complete victory," as it was called, was won by Lieutenant Gloire over 600 foemen, of whom a sixth were killed, but Gloire was himself wounded and had to retire to Kasongo, whence his colleague, Lieutenant Svenson, advanced with a column 700 strong to Sangulu near the scene of Gloire's exploit. There he was surprised by the enemy on 4th November and forced to retreat to Kabambare. But the insurgents were close upon his heels, and the southern stronghold, after all that had been done to make it unassailable, had to be evacuated on 14th November, probably through the disaffection of part of its garrison. Three whites and over 200 native troops were killed in the fight, and the insurgents had a week in which to remove all the military stores and other valuables for which they cared before the arrival of Baron Dhanis, who hurried up from Kasongo, at that time his headquarters, with two guns, seven white officers, and 1,400 native troops, and who, finding the place empty, had no difficulty in recapturing it. On 24th November he considered himself justified in reporting that "peace had been restored," and the statement appears to have been so far correct that there was no immediate renewal of actual warfare on a large scale in this part of Congoland. But elsewhere something like chaos prevailed.

The Consequent Chaos.

"For a whole year," Captain Boshart, a German of long experience in the *force publique*, wrote in 1898, "the mutineers have, after the massacre of their officers, wandered about the country, murdering, burning, and ravaging, and the Congo State is absolutely incapable of putting an end to the scandal. In spite of the victories so pompously announced from time to time, the State troops have not, up to the present day, succeeded in bringing in a single deserter. Instead of this, all soldiers of the Batetela tribe serving with other contingents have been disarmed, put in irons, and sent with their wives to Boma, where they have been immured in the Shinkakasa Fort and condemned to hard labour at the fortifications for an indefinite time. Among them were some volunteers who served bravely and devotedly to the satisfaction of their officers, and whose time had nearly expired when they were made prisoners."*

An American Presbyterian missionary, the Rev. S. P. Werner, a tolerant and almost admiring critic of the Congo State's administration, was in England at the end of January, 1899, after four years' residence in the country. "When it is remembered," he stated, "that Baron Dhanis is over three hundred miles from his nearest base, with only a handful of white men and a percentage of unreliable troops, it will occasion no surprise if further disaster awaits the Belgians. According to my latest information, the mutinous natives are practically on all sides of Dhanis's present position. The home of the Batetela is on the west of the Lualaba, and the mutinous troops who have captured Kabambare are on the east and north; thus he is practically surrounded."†

More alarming was the report of Lieutenant Frank J. Andrew, a British subject in the Congo State's service, who came to England on sick leave in the following May.

* 'Zehn Jahre Afrikanischen Lebens,' p. 157.

† A Reuter's interview in the *Manchester Guardian*, 30th January, 1899, and other newspapers.

"From Leopoldville to the distant shores of Tanganyika," he said, "the whole interior is the scene of fighting in some form or other. There is, perhaps, scarcely a single post on the whole Congo at which a portion of the garrison is not sent on expeditions against natives. Just before I left the upper river"—his station being at Barumba, opposite to Basoko, at the outlet of the Aruwimi—"news came down of the capture by revolted troops of the large station of Kabambare, in the Tanganyika region. At the time there were some twelve white officers on the station, and five of them were killed or wounded, the remainder escaping into the bush. The mutineers, after capturing all the baggage and ammunition, evacuated the place, which was, indeed, useless to them. The fall of this post was no doubt chiefly due to the death of Captain Svenson, a Scandinavian, one of Dhanis's most trustworthy officers. For some time previously he had been dangerously ill, and he died on the night before the attack. Baron Dhanis and his expedition were still fighting in the Stanley Falls district when I left in February."*

Similar testimony is from Mr. Ewart S. Grogan, a young Englishman, who travelled from the Cape to Cairo in 1899, and who, on 5th April, was at Mtoa, on Lake Tanganyika, about 150 miles to the north-east of Kabambare, and "the chief Congo station on the lake." "Here," he recorded, "all the officials in the district had collected, having ignominiously fled from the rebels. One gentleman, who had retired from a station further up the lake, had thrown all the station ammunition and ivory into the lake, solely on a report that the rebels were within a hundred miles. The rebels, hearing of the action, went to the place and quietly picked up both the ivory and the cartridges, thereby gaining a new lease of life. At Mtoa the Belgians had built elaborate defences, and had protected all the approaches with barbed wire; and, in case the rebels

* A Reuter's interview in the *Manchester Guardian*, 26th May, 1899, and other newspapers.

should come, they had cut down all the bananas and were consequently short of food. There were one or two unfortunate Scandinavians in the service who were being thrown out as pickets. One of these gentlemen came and asked us for some poison in case he should be caught by the rebels with his totally inadequate force. This chaotic condition has now lasted for five years, and there appears to be no man capable of grappling with the situation."*

The chaos continued. On 20th July, 1899, Baron Dhanis, it was averred, won another overwhelming victory over the rebels; the battlefield being near Sangulu again, and the announcement was that in six hours' fighting a State force of 500 had killed at least 300 and wounded many more of the enemy. But in so far as there was truth in such statements, issued from time to time, their chief significance was in showing that earlier achievements had been by no means so successful as they were alleged to be, and that throughout nearly all the east and south of Belgian Congoland nothing but further havoc resulted from the efforts of the State and its agents to obtain mastery over the inhabitants.

* 'From the Cape to Cairo,' 1900, p. 90.

CHAPTER XII.

MONOPOLIST PERSECUTIONS [1897-1901].

ON 8th October, 1897, it was announced that Major Lothaire, promoted and otherwise honoured during his stay in Europe after being brought home to offer his explanation of the killing of Mr. Stokes in January, 1895, was about to leave Antwerp for further employment on the Congo. "Major Lothaire," it was stated with a semblance of official authority, "is regarded as a most capable and firm administrator," and it was considered that "such a man was required, as Baron Dhanis was fully occupied in recovering the ground lost by some of his troops." * It was not, however, avowedly as a high functionary of the State, or as Baron Dhanis's colleague in military work, but as chief agent of the Société Anversoise du Commerce au Congo that Major Lothaire returned to Africa.

Commercial Developments.

A new stage in the commercial operations of the Congo State, on its own responsibility, or through the action of monopolist and privileged intermediaries, had by this time been entered upon, and Major Lothaire's assistance in controlling affairs, if possible, in the western and central districts was rendered all the more necessary by the failures of Baron Dhanis in the east and south.

A show of Congolese curiosities, including a crowd of unfortunate natives brought over for the purpose, had provided King Leopold's great possession with a striking advertisement at the Universal Exhibition held in Antwerp in 1894, and it was followed by a far more imposing show of the same sort in connection with the Brussels Exhibition of 1897. On this occasion a large part of the royal gardens at Tervueren was occupied with improvised villages of

* *Times*, 9th October, 1897.

Bangala, Mayombe, and other natives, and an improvised station of the *force publique;* and there were indoor displays of the ivory, rubber, timber, and other products of the country. Grotesque fetish-figures, and artistic carvings and fabrics executed in Belgium from the raw materials of which unlimited supplies were declared to be available, were there in abundance, but no specimens of the *chicotte* or other instruments of torture, nor were the carefully policed slaves in the enclosures allowed to indulge in cannibal orgies. The whole collection was an effective adjunct to the vigorous efforts that were being made at the same time to attract capital and adventurers to the larger schemes for Congo exploitation which were then on foot, and which were expected to derive enormous benefits from the railway between Matadi and Leopoldville, soon to be completed and opened for traffic.

New and Reconstructed Companies.

Before 1897 all the companies started in Belgium for promoting commercial enterprise in the Congo—even the Abir and the Société Anversoise—were ostensibly international in character and scope, and the State, though it might be a shareholder or profit-sharer, had no avowed control over them, except as parts of the whole community whose welfare and good behaviour it was bound to secure as far as it could. Moreover, it devolved on them to conform to Belgian, not to Congo law, which makes no provision that every limited liability company shall consist of at least seven members, shall submit its accounts for official inspection, and shall comply with other regulations designed to safeguard individual and public interests. The first limited liability company to be constituted under Congo law was the Société Générale Africaine, started in the autumn of 1897, with a capital of 3,000,000 francs, and with power "to acquire concessions, leases, and properties of every description, and to exercise all the rights of political administration arising out of them." It was founded by royal decree. On the Sovereign devolved the

appointment of all its managers and agents, "unless he chose to delegate any of his privileges to the president selected by him." It was, in fact, in every respect a State institution, competent to carry on its work as secretly as it pleased.*

The more important of the older companies promptly found it convenient or necessary to follow suit. The Société Anversoise and the Abir were dissolved under Congo law and reconstructed in January, 1898—the former with 3,400 shares and the latter with 2,000 shares. In neither case was the nominal value or the ownership of the shares stated; but there can be no doubt that they remained as before, the State being in each case owner of half of the total shares at 500 francs apiece. At the same date a smaller, but very influential company, the Comptoir Commercial Congolais, originated in 1895, and having its principal seat at Fayala, in the Kwango district, was also reconstructed. In its capital of 500,000 francs the State held no shares, but it claimed 50 per cent. of the profits as payment for its creation of the monopoly. Yet another company, and a new one, availing itself of Congo law, was the Société des Chemins de Fer vicinaux de Mayombe, founded in September, 1898, with a capital of 3,000,000 francs, of which the State held half, to build a railway running northward from Boma as an auxiliary to the line from Matadi to Leopoldville which had at length been completed, and interesting in connection with contemporary extensions of Belgian operations in French Congo which the new railway might be expected to assist.†

The Lower Congo Railway.

The conclusion of the larger railway, after more than ten years of arduous and costly enterprise, gave occasion for great and not unreasonable rejoicings. It was expected to open, as it did to some extent, a new era in the political as well as in the commercial development

* Wauters, 'L'État Indépendant du Congo,' pp. 398, 399.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 395, 398.

of Congoland, not only by enabling all the produce of the interior which could be brought by water down to Stanley Pool to be carried overland past the long series of rocks and rapids as far as Matadi, and thence shipped direct for foreign parts, but also by affording equal facilities for the conveyance of troops, military appliances, and the like between Boma and every part of the Upper Congo. Almost the first use to which this railway was put, indeed, five weeks before the formal opening, was, by way of conciliating French critics, the carriage of men and stores towards the French settlement of Brazzaville for Major Marchand's expedition to Fashoda.* For the formal opening on 2nd July representatives of several European nations were escorted to Boma by Major Thys in a special steamer, as guests of the Congo State, and the reports of two of the French guests, M. Pierre Mille† and Baron E. de Mandat-Grancey,‡ threw serviceable light on much besides the actual ceremony.

Incidents of its Construction.

An earlier visitor, M. Edouard Picard, a member of the Belgian Senate, had preceded them along most of the same ground by nearly two years. He reached Banana at the end of August, 1896, and journeyed thence by river and rail as far as Tumba, at that time the terminus of the line, and from Tumba he surveyed the desolation consequent upon the engineering exploits. "The cruel impression conveyed by the mutilated forests," he wrote, "is heightened in the places where, till lately, native villages nestled, hidden and protected by thick and lofty foliage. The inhabitants have fled. They have fled in spite of encouraging palavers and promises of peace and kind treatment. They have burnt their huts, and great heaps of cinders mark the sites, amid deserted palm-groves and trampled-down banana fields. The terrors

* *Daily Chronicle*, 5th May and 17th June, 1898.

† 'Au Congo Belge' (1899).

‡ 'Au Congo: Impressions d'un Touriste' (1900).

caused by the memory of inhuman floggings, of massacres, of rapes and abductions, haunt their poor brains, and they go as fugitives to seek shelter in the recesses of the hospitable bush, or, across the frontiers, to find it in French or Portuguese Congo, not yet afflicted with so many labours and alarms, far from the roads traversed by white men, those baneful intruders, and their train of strange and disquieting habits." The outlook was as gloomy when he wandered along the path trodden by the caravans to the Pool and back again. "We are constantly meeting these carriers, either isolated or in Indian file; blacks, blacks, miserable blacks, with horribly filthy loin-cloths for their only garments; their bare and frizzled heads supporting their loads—chest, bale, ivory-tusk, hamper of rubber, or barrel; for the most part broken down, sinking under the burdens made heavier by their weariness and insufficiency of food, consisting of a handful of rice and tainted dried fish; pitiful walking caryatids; beasts of burden with the lank limbs of monkeys, pinched up features, eyes fixed and round with the strain of keeping their balance and the dulness of exhaustion. Thus they come and go by thousands, organized in a system of human transport, requisitioned by the State armed with its irresistible *force publique*, supplied by the chiefs whose slaves they are and who pounce on their wages; jogging on, with knees bent and stomach protruding, one arm raised up and the other resting on a long stick; dusty and maladorous; covered with insects as their huge procession passes over mountains and through valleys; dying on the tramp, or, when the tramp is over, going to their villages to die of exhaustion."*

Speaking of the rapid lessening of the population in the Lower Congo region, where, before the railway was constructed, "the Negro was the only beast of burden," M. de Mandat-Grancey attributed it partly to the excessive mortality consequent on the gross ill-treatment of the natives, and partly to the fact, due to the same cause, that

* 'En Congolie' (1896), pp. 95-7.

"many of the small tribes in this region have migrated to Portugese possessions to avoid the *corvée*." "They prefer slavery," he cynically remarked. "I have always held that the race which has survived three centuries of the slave trade will be destroyed by fifty years of philanthropy. If this voluntary movement of Congolese tribes towards a country in which slavery flourishes, in order to escape from liberty, is proved, it will be a fine argument in support of my thesis." "I am convinced," he wrote on another page, "that, owing to their system of requisitioning carriers, systematically and violently pursued during the past ten years, our good friends the Belgians have destroyed infinitely more Negroes than the Portuguese slave trade disposed of in two or three centuries. I am induced to think so by the evident fact that this country was in former days much more peopled than it is now. All along the railway line I saw abandoned banana fields. Now a banana tree never grows of its own accord, and it quickly disappears if it is not cultivated. A deserted banana field, therefore, always indicates the site of a ruined village. The thousands of skeletons that border the old caravan route, which we crossed two or three times, are those of former inhabitants of these villages. It is possible, now that there will be less need of carriers, thanks to the railway, that those who survive will have quieter times, and that the population will improve; but I do not expect it."*

Lower Congo Desolation.

"The most striking characteristic of this country," wrote M. Mille, after journeying from Matadi to Stanley Pool, "is the absence of human life. It is not, after you have passed the arid mountains of Palabala, poor or unfertile; but it is empty. The Portuguese organized the slave trade; the modern demand for ivory and rubber has organized the carrying system; and I feel sure that the lot of the slave was much happier than that of the carrier. I ought to observe that the roads are not harder

* 'Au Congo,' pp. 7, 175.

and that the burdens are lighter in the Congo than in Madagascar. But I have never heard of a porter dying of misery and fatigue under his load between Tamatave and Antananariva. This is a common incident in the Congo, in spite of wages high enough to procure good food."*

Both travellers found more to deplore and complain of in the management of affairs in the interior, which it was the object of the Matadi-to-Leopoldville railway to open up, and which now began to be more energetically and lucratively exploited than heretofore by the Congo Government itself, and by the great companies privileged to carry on "trade" in their several areas, as partners of the State and with its assistance. "The basis of King Leopold's political economy," M. Mille pointed out, "has been to form an army strong enough to compel the natives to provide the ivory and rubber required from them. Now the Mohammedan blacks are intellectually superior, faithful to their word and their flag; but they cost too much when 20,000 are wanted. The Congo State, therefore, recruited its troops at home. It took chiefly the Bangala and the Batetela, members of the two great fighting tribes of Equatorial Africa. It had not—or it had not sufficiently—the wit shown by the Carthaginians, who employed their mercenaries against one another. Grouped in companies and battalions, the Batetela and Bangala have taken thought for themselves. In the service of the Belgians, armed with weapons of precision and knowing how to use them, subject to a discipline quite new to them, and understanding for the first time the power that obedience gives to a chief, perhaps they dreamt that, after having used their new arms and discipline against the enemies of the Belgians, they would use them against the Belgians themselves." That was already happening in parts of the State's territory. In other parts the savage troops served their original purpose. M. Mille tells of one "former military functionary of the State, now become the agent of a great privileged

* 'Au Congo Belge,' p. 49.

company, who one day left Stanley Pool for a great plundering and conquering expedition, taking with him 25,000 cartridges, which he said represented 25,000 kilos of rubber, and who kept his word."*

Its Causes and their Working.

"Yes, sir, your king is the biggest ivory and rubber merchant in the world," an English fellow-passenger said to M. Picard on his voyage home from the Congo on a steamer laden with more than a million francs' worth of ivory and more than a million francs' worth of rubber from the *domaine privé;* and M. Picard has briefly explained the way in which the *domaine privé* is utilised in the interests of its self-made proprietor. "He obtains from these territories the tributes and payments in kind which appear as receipts in the State's budgets, after having decided, partly to cover certain expenses, partly from a desire to get back the considerable amounts drawn from his personal resources for the foundation and organisation of the State, to become his own factor and negotiator after the fashion of the companies, and to collect the rubber and ivory on its domain. This was easily done, thanks to the posts scattered about by the State, to the terror of its name to the natives, and to the *force publique* at its disposal. These factors placed it in a commanding position for recruiting rubber-collectors and obtaining ivory. The results are magnificent, and cannot fail to increase. They are the explanation of the vast quantities of merchandise sent to Europe from the *domaine privé*, which already must yield an annual revenue of many million francs, apart from the relatively small sum shown in the budget. This commercial enterprise is, however, attended by some abuses. The agents of the State charged with watching and collecting the products, each around the post assigned to him, are interested in this 'affair,' if not by direct commission, at any rate by bounties proportionate to the results obtained. They are thus induced to use the lash without

* 'Au Congo Belge,' p. 187.

limit in their dealings with the natives, to exact excessive supplies, and, in the event of refusal or resistance, to employ force in ways of which the echoes are sometimes heard in Europe, which cause it to be said that if the Congo is a land of exchange, it is one in which goods are exchanged for gunshots—that the result is obtained by burning of villages and mutilation of blacks, not always ordered by the officials themselves, but chargeable against them because they have been committed by barbarous auxiliaries employed in punishing the recalcitrants. The army is composed of Negroes, cannibals by instinct, under a few whites, and when they are in the field their ferocity equals that of a pack of hounds hunting their quarry. In all questions of work, porterage, wages, transport by steamer or rail, the *domaine privé* naturally obtains a preference, along with the companies which are specially favoured, and in which perhaps shares are held by the State. Hence the recriminations of traders who have to compete so unequally with this redoubtable rival, at once State and Merchant."*

As explicit were the remarks of Baron de Mandat-Grancey on the Congo State's solution of the problem "how to make the natives pay taxes? how to compel them to work?" "To accomplish this feat," he wrote, "it speculated on the ferocious hatreds that divide the tribes. I ought not to say the hatreds. It would be more correct to speak of the liking they have for one another; for they only make war in order that they may eat the prisoners they have taken. From each tribe a certain number of soldiers was recruited. As soon as these were trained they were sent to a distance. A garrison among the Batetela, for instance, was composed of a hundred Bangala under a white officer, and in the same way a hundred Bangala composed a garrison among the Batetela. It was quite certain that a hundred Batetela, armed with good rifles and under a white officer, could hold their ground against any

* 'En Congolie,' p. 201.

number of Bangala, provided only with arrows, and also that there would be no danger of any deserting, as all who left the fort would at once be eaten. This organisation once set up, the State was absolute master of the country, and the time for making profit out of it had arrived. Each village was taxed. It was required to furnish so many kilogrammes of rubber. If these were not produced, all the women were seized. If, on the other hand, the chief brought more than was ordered, he was paid for the surplus at the rate of twenty centimes the kilo"*—that is, about a penny a pound.

State Budgets and Company Profits.

The statement that by such methods the Congo Government made itself absolute master of the country is not correct, as the policy adopted towards the natives produced numberless smaller risings in nearly every district, in addition to what are called the Batetela mutinies; but that they were profitable to the monopolists in whose interests they were resorted to cannot be doubted. The published budgets of the State show, except for 1902, a small loss each year. The confessed receipts and expenses severally estimated for were, for 1897, the year in which the railway was opened, 9,369,300 and 10,141,871 francs; for 1898, 14,765,050 and 17,251,973 francs; for 1899, 19,066,500 and 19,672,965 francs; for 1900, 26,256,500 and 27,731,254 francs; for 1901, 30,651,054 and 31,256,054 francs; and for 1902, 28,709,000 and 28,549,000 francs. But, throughout, the income derived from tribute and taxes levied in the *domaine*, and apart from customs dues, licences, stamps, and so forth, has been more than half of the whole. For 1901 it was reckoned at 17,424,630 francs, and for 1902 at 15,425,000 francs. It was largely in excess, moreover, of the charges for the *force publique* and other administrative services within the country itself, showing a considerable profit, even if it is assumed that all these appliances were devoted to tribute-collecting and tax-raising among

* 'Au Congo,' p. 275.

the natives. The estimated expenses of the *force publique* were 7,700,182 francs for 1901, and 7,865,132 francs for 1902; those of the administrative services were 3,605,545 francs for 1901, and 3,635,545 francs for 1902.*

The profits of some of the privileged companies in which the State was a partner are much more clearly shown and more startling. Those, for instance, of the Société Anversoise, with a capital of 1,700,000 francs, were 120,697 francs in 1897; 3,986,832 francs in 1898, the year of the opening of the railway; 3,083,976 francs in 1899; and 84,833 francs in 1900—or more than 70 per cent. in 1897; more than 230 per cent. in 1898; more than 180 per cent. in 1899; and nearly 50 per cent. in 1900. Again, the profits of the Abir, with a capital of 1,000,000 francs, were 2,692,063 francs, or nearly 270 per cent., in 1899; 4,718,575 francs, or more than 470 per cent., in 1900; and 2,455,182 francs, or more than 245 per cent., in 1901; and, to be content with one other illustration, those of the Comptoir Commercial Congolais, with a capital of 500,000 francs, were 262,089 francs in 1899, or more than 52 per cent.

Major Lothaire's New Undertaking.

Both the great rise in the profits of the Société Anversoise in 1898, as compared with 1897, and their subsequent lowering may be in part attributable to Major Lothaire's employment as managing director of that company's affairs in Africa from the end of 1897, his headquarters being at Mobeka, on the junction of the Mongala with the Congo, and controlling the Bangala district.

There had been frequent and serious troubles there in former days, and it was evidently with a view to strong measures being taken that Major Lothaire was sent out. His procedure much increased the evils it was ostensibly intended to suppress. In November, 1898, he had to

* The above and following figures are chiefly taken from the 'Bulletin Officiel,' but some are from valuable articles by Mr. E. D. Morel in the *Speaker* of 18th July, 4th and 25th August, 1st September, and 1st December, 1900, and the *Contemporary Review* of March, 1902.

obtain the assistance of Captain Doorme, with about 700 native troops and auxiliaries, in an expedition to avenge some exceptionally grave disturbances in his district, where, according to report, six white men, besides 300 or more black men, had been attacked, defeated, and eaten. With this force, it was reported next month, Major Lothaire was killing the natives "by hundreds." * The work of slaughter went on through 1899, 1900, and 1901, and some light was thrown on its causes and antecedents by sworn evidence given at a trial in Boma, the details of which reached Europe in April, 1900.

M. Moray's Revelations.

In this evidence a subordinate agent of the Société Anversoise named Moray, against whom Major Lothaire had taken proceedings on a charge of disobedience, disclosed the nature of the task assigned to him and his colleagues, under the immediate superintendence of one Van Eycken, in "trading" with a Mongala tribe known as the Budja. "When natives bring rubber to a commercial station," Moray averred, "they are received by the agents and surrounded by soldiers. The baskets are then weighed, and if they do not contain the required weight of five kilogrammes the owner receives a hundred lashes with the *chicotte*. Supposing a village contains a hundred men and only fifty of them present themselves at the station, these are detained as hostages, and soldiers are sent to shoot the remaining fifty and burn the entire village. Natives who have 'submitted' and who have been induced to fight in this local strife are enrolled as 'auxiliaries,' armed with spears, and expected to pursue their usual mode of warfare—pitiless massacre, followed by

* With reference to these proceedings King Leopold caused a communication to be made in his name to the *Étoile Belge* of 1st December, 1889, in which it was said, "The State would be making but a poor return for the confidence which the Powers placed in it both at Berlin and at Brussels if did not everywhere promptly take steps to overcome barbarism. It intends to rise to the height of its mission, and is convinced that, with the means at its disposal, it will be in a position to meet all contingencies."

pillage. When a fight is over they are encouraged to indulge in their cannibal instincts." Of one representative incident he reported: "We were a party of thirty under Van Eycken, who sent us into a village to ascertain if the natives were collecting rubber, and, if not, to murder all, men, women, and children. We found the natives sitting peaceably. We asked what they were doing. They were unable to reply, thereupon we fell upon them and killed them all without mercy. An hour later we were rejoined by Van Eycken, and told him what we had done. He answered 'It is well, but you have not done enough.' Thereupon he ordered us to cut off the heads of the men and hang them on the village palisades, also"—after unmentionable mutilations—"to hang the women and children on the palisades in the form of a cross."*

The Budja Rising.

A fortnight before the publication in Europe of these and other statements like news had arrived of a rising of the Budja in which Van Eycken and three other Europeans were killed. The immediate cause of the rising, it would seem, was the destruction of a native village, when sixty-two men, eighty-four women, and four children were killed.† In retaliation the Budja attacked the Société's factory at Yambinga, held by Captain Wynants, two agents, and thirty soldiers, who were only rescued, after they had been beleaguered for six days, by the arrival of 200 troops under M. Gilson, followed by Major Lothaire with 260 more. The details of the havoc wrought by this force are not on record; but the district was described as "a vast charnel house," for the

* *Petit Bleu* of Brussels, 26th April, 1900, containing the report of its correspondent at Matadi.

† The publication of this report led to an interview with a returned Congo official, which appeared in the Antwerp *Nieuwe Gazette* of 10th April, 1900. "When first commissioned to establish a fort," he said, "I was given some native soldiers and a prodigious stock of ammunition. My chief gave me the following instructions: 'Crush every obstacle!' I obeyed, and cut through my district by fire and sword. I had left Antwerp thinking I was simply to gather rubber. Great was my stupefaction when the truth dawned on me."

horrors of which Major Lothaire was primarily responsible. The accuracy of the report was virtually admitted by the Belgian Government when a question was addressed to it on the subject on 19th April in the Chamber of Representatives. The Foreign Minister, while insisting that Belgium was in no way answerable for anything that might be done in the Congo, then announced that this matter was being inquired into by the proper authorities; and his statement was confirmed by the fact that M. Wahis, who was on holiday at the time, had hurried off from Antwerp on 16th April to resume his post as Governor-General. It was also announced on 1st May by the Congo Government that vigorous steps were being taken by the acting Administrator, who had already caused one of the Belgians implicated to be arrested.* This person, Louis Lacroix by name, appears to have been promptly released, his defence being that all he had done was done under the orders of Congo State officials. But Moray and others were tried at Boma on a charge of murder, and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Moray's sentence was for ten years: ten months afterwards it was reported that he had escaped from prison and was supposed to have taken refuge in Portuguese territory. Before the trial Major Lothaire, hastily resigning his managing directorship or being recalled from it, returned to Antwerp in time to be married to a sister of Baron Dhanis in September, and to write to the Belgian newspapers in November, substantially admitting the truth of Moray's statements as to the way in which rubber-collecting was carried on, but throwing the whole blame for it on Moray himself, and on others who had been punished for their misdeeds.†

* *Times*, 20th April, 1900; *Daily Chronicle*, 2nd May, 1900. The brief summary of a painful story which is given above is based on such reports as were allowed to appear in the Belgian and other journals of the time.

† Major Lothaire was reported to have left Antwerp for the Congo on 10th October, 1891, "in the service of another financial group," apparently in connection with one of the Franco-Belgian companies to be referred to hereafter; but he was in Europe again within two months. A curious attempt

Troubles in the Interior.

The persecution of natives incident to the collection of rubber and the troubles consequent thereon were by no means limited to the Bangala district, where they have lasted to this day, although it was announced in October, 1900, that the Budja rising had been "definitely suppressed" through the killing of 300 of the insurgents by 400 native troops sent against them. "Excluding the section between the coast and Leopoldville," Lieutenant Andrew had reported as to the state of affairs when he left the Congo in February, 1899, "it is well within the mark to say that the zone of safety and so-called civilisation does not extend a mile back from the Équateur, Bangala, Aruwimi, and Stanley Falls districts. To venture alone a mile from the river would probably mean massacre. Even in the case of steamers tying up for the night to cut wood the native crews sent ashore for this purpose are frequently fallen upon and speared. When I went up the river I saw at least five Belgian wood-ports burning, having been attacked and destroyed by interior cannibal tribes."*

Captain Bell's Fate.

Lieutenant Andrew's colleague, Captain Maurice Bell, a British militia officer in the Congo State's service, had lost his life a few weeks before under conditions painfully illustrating the general turmoil then prevalent. "On 18th January," according to Lieutenant Andrew, "Captain Bell, having been ordered down the river from his post at Yambuya to Basoko, left the latter place on an expedition against certain Aruwimi tribes living four days' journey from the river. The expedition was commanded by Com-

at an explanation of his return, apparently inspired, was published in the *Métropole* of 12th December, 1901. "After the expedition to Mayombe," we are told, "Major Lothaire demanded to be freed by the Congo Court, but his application was rejected. He then left for Europe; but when he arrived at Banana the judge came on board and requested him to return to Boma. Major Lothaire went as far as San Thome and returned to Boma. He then re-embarked for Europe." That is the latest news about him.

* *Manchester Guardian*, 26th May, 1899.

mandant Van Wert, who was accompanied by Lieutenant Giertsen, a Scandinavian, Captain Bell, and 150 black troops. Its object was to prevent the tribes descending upon peaceful villages on the main Congo river. The force left Basoko in canoes in the morning, and reached Bopamba the same night. Then they left the river and struck into the bush. After two days' march Commandant Van Wert divided the expedition into three sections, each of which consisted of fifty soldiers commanded by one of the white men. Lieutenant Giertsen was sent in an easterly direction, and Captain Bell to the south, the commandant remaining where he was. Captain Bell and his small force proceeded in the direction of a village called Mondimbe. While marching in single file through a dense forest they were suddenly surrounded by 300 spearmen. The soldiers, who were mere boys, and, like all their comrades, arrant cowards, no sooner saw the natives approaching than they threw down their rifles and cartridge belts and cleared into the bush, leaving Bell, his sergeant, and one boy to resist the attack. Aided by his boy, Bell loaded and fired his rifle again and again, and when at close quarters used it with such effect that he accounted for fully ten natives before the end came. The cannibals, however, in the end naturally overcame Bell and his two companions. First he was speared, then cut up, and afterwards eaten. In accordance with their usual custom, when a white man is killed, pieces of the body were despatched to all the surrounding villages to inflame the natives. When the news of the tragedy reached the main river a punitive expedition was sent from Basoko, also a force from Commandant Van Wert. In the punitive expedition a hundred natives were killed and a number taken prisoners."*

Like "punitive expeditions" were plentiful all over the Congo State's territory. Passing through the Semliki valley and by the side of Lake Albert Nyanza, some 350

* *Manchester Guardian*, 26th May, 1899.

miles almost due east of the scene of Captain Bell's death, and on the borders of Uganda, Mr. Grogan, in September, 1899, heard "tales of misery and oppression," of which he gave some samples. One was that "a Congo Free State official had suddenly swooped down on the country a year ago, and, after shooting down numbers of the natives, had returned west, carrying off forty young women, numerous children, and all the cattle and goats, and putting a finishing touch to the proceedings by a grand pyrotechnic display, during which they bound the old women, threw them into the huts, and then fired the roof." "Several absolutely independent witnesses informed me that this had actually been done in the presence of the official and the gentlemen who accompanied him," said Mr. Grogan; and he added, "When I was in Mboga the Balega told me similar tales; here I was repeatedly given accounts that tallied in all essentials; and further north the Wakoba made the same piteous complaints. And I saw myself that a country apparently well populated and responsive to just treatment in Lugard's time (and that under very trying conditions, owing to the numbers of destitute aliens in the country—to wit, the Sudanese) is now practically a howling wilderness; the scattered inhabitants, living almost without cultivation in the marshes, thickets, and reeds, madly fleeing even from their own shadows. Chaos, hopeless abyssmal chaos, from Mweru to the Nile; in the south, tales of cruelty of undoubted veracity, but which I could not repeat without actual investigation on the spot; on Tanganyika, absolute impotence, revolted Askaris ranging at their own sweet will; on Kivu, a hideous wave of cannibalism ranging unchecked through the land; while in the north the very white men, who should be keeping peace where chaos now reigns supreme, are spending thousands in making of peace a chaos of their own. I have no hesitation in condemning the whole State as a vampire growth, intended to suck the country dry, and to provide a happy hunting-ground for a

Mr. Grogan's Report.

pack of unprincipled outcasts and untutored scoundrels. The few sound men in the country are powerless to stem the tide of oppression."*

The Kasai Massacres.

One of the best rubber-yielding districts a few years ago — not leased to any chartered company, but reserved for State management, and apparently with some tact, as no reports appeared as to grave scandals or disturbances in it—was the western portion of the Kasai country, far enough away from Luluaburg to escape the troubles there incident to the Batetela mutinies. In the early days of effort to suppress those mutinies, however, efficient help had been given to the State by a section of the Basongo tribe, to the north-east of the Sankuru, known by the name or nickname of their chief Zapo-Zap. When the Batetela were expelled from Luluaburg large numbers of the Zapo-Zaps were lodged there instead, as soldiers or vassals of the State, and allowed to gratify their own cannibalistic and other savage tastes on condition of meeting the requirements of their employers. "These Zapo-Zaps," the Reverend W. M. Morrison, in charge of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission station at Luebo, about 120 miles north-east of Luluaburg, said in a petition to King Leopold, dated 21st October, 1899, "armed as they are, and sent out by the State to collect tribute for the Government and other purposes, are a terror to the whole region. They are the great slave dealers of this section—a traffic which the State is supposed to be making efforts to suppress." The American missionaries, working at Luebo since 1890, had heard of atrocities in the surrounding region, but had no personal experience of them until September, 1899, when, as Mr. Morrison reported, a raiding party of Zapo-Zaps, who for two months had been "plundering, murdering, burning neighbouring villages, and capturing slaves," came within a few hours' walk of their station at Bongadi or Ibanche. Thereupon one of the missionaries, the Reverend

* 'From the Cape to Cairo,' p. 227.

H. W. Sheppard, went on a tour of inspection. "Within a distance of ten or twelve hours," according to Mr. Morrison's condensed report on the subject, "thirteen villages have been deserted and plundered, and six other villages burned. Mr. Sheppard went to the camp of the Zapo-Zaps, where he found about 500 of them, with one of their own number as leader. There was no white officer in charge. Here the Zapo-Zaps had made a large stockade, into which, a few days before, they had invited all the chiefs and sub-chiefs of the neighbouring villages and their women. When they were all inside tribute of rubber, ivory, and slaves was demanded, which they were unable to pay. Thereupon they were fired upon by the Zapo-Zaps, and many were shot down, only a few escaping to tell the tale."*

Mr. Sheppard's own account of his visit to this stockade, or "the fatal trap," as he called it, may be quoted from. He was admitted to it by the Zapo chief Mlumba Nkusa. "To enter the fatal trap," he wrote, "you must get down on your knees. A man brought me a kind of drink in a pot and placed it before me; but I refused, asking for water instead, which I could hardly drink because the man's hands were even then dripping with the crimson blood of innocent men, women, and children. The camp or trap is eighty yards long by forty wide, and full of the odours of the dead lying about. The chief remarked, 'You don't like my treatment of the Bakuba people, do you?' I replied 'That is not my palaver. The State has sent you, and so you have to go by your instructions; but was the palaver a strong one?' I asked in such a way as to draw the great chief out. He replied, 'I have been here nearly two months. I demanded thirty slaves from this side of the river, thirty from the other side, rubber, goats, and goods. They only gave me eight slaves, two points of

* These and the following details are quoted from the *Aborigines' Friend*, April, 1900, pp. 500-508, embodying reports printed in the New York *Independent* and the magazine of the American Presbyterian Missionary Society.

ivory, 2,500 balls of rubber, a few goats and fowls, and some corn and chumby.' I then inquired to what tribes the State had sent him. He replied, 'To the Bakete, to the Bena Piana ,and to the Bakuba, and especially to Lukunga's people.' 'Are you going to Lukunga's people?' I asked. He evaded, but one of his men eagerly said, 'Yes, and we are going to kill them all.' I then inquired, 'How many guns have you?' He answered, 'One hundred and thirty cap-guns and eight State rifles, and plenty of powder, a big box full, which the State gave me, and plenty of caps.' 'How did the fight come up?' I asked. Mlumba replied, 'I sent for all the chiefs, sub-chiefs, and men and women, to come on a certain day to finish the palaver. When they had entered these small gates' (he pointed to the fence round the spot), I demanded all my tribute and threatened death if they refused. They did refuse, and I ordered the gates to be closed, and killed them here inside the fence.' 'How many did you kill?' I asked. He replied, 'We killed plenty; would you like to see some of them?' He then added, 'I think we killed between eighty and ninety, besides those in other villages to which I sent my people.' The chief and I then walked out on the plain near the camp. There were three people lying near, with the flesh carved off from the waist down. 'Why are these people carved so, leaving only the bones?' I asked. 'My people ate them,' he answered promptly. Near by was the body of a large headless man. 'Where is this man's head?' I asked. 'Oh,' the chief replied, 'they have made a bowl of his forehead to rub up tobacco and diamba in.' As we continued our walk I counted forty-one bodies. I asked, 'Where are the rest?' He answered, 'The rest are eaten by my people.' As we returned to the camp we saw the dead body of a young woman lying near, with the right hand cut off. I asked what this meant, and Mlumba Nkusa explained that they always cut off the right hand to give it to the State on their return. 'Can you show me some of their hands?' I asked. He led me to a shed covered with

a framework of sticks, under which a slow fire was burning, and there they were—the right hands of the victims of the slaughter. I counted them, eighty-one in all."

"Almost daily," Mr. Morrison said in his petition to King Leopold, "slaves are brought down here to Luebo by these same Zapo-Zaps and exposed for sale. In their sad story they tell us of their capture, of the murder of their friends, and of the plundering of their villages. We believe that the Zapo-Zaps are not primarily to blame, for they are armed and sent out by the State; but we do believe that all State officials, from the highest to the lowest, who give their sanction to such outrages are to be blamed, and we hope and pray that sure and swift justice will be visited upon all who are thus implicated in inflicting these outrages upon an innocent and helpless people; and that, too, under the guise of a so-called civilised Government."

In his appeal Mr. Morrison reported that he had complained to the commissary of the district, whose answer was that he had already sent soldiers to catch Mlumba Nkusa and his 500 followers, but they could not find them. He also reported that two State officials had come down "to investigate the affair," with the only result that the frightened people, "in their dread of the State and all connected with it," had fled into the forest.

It was probably to these perfunctory proceedings that reference was made in a curt letter from the Brussels authorities, dated 23rd February, 1900, informing the transmitter of the petition of 21st October that "le Gouvernement de l'État Indépendant du Congo était informé des charges portées contre les Zapo-Zaps par le Reverend W. M. Morrison, et la justice en était saisie et indignait." No other action, at any rate, appears to have been taken by the authorities, and they were able to persevere in their persecution of the mild-mannered Bakuba without fear of such resistance as was offered by the Batetela in the east, the Bangala in the north, and others elsewhere.

The General Revolt.

It is only, as a rule, through the complaints of missionaries like Mr. Morrison in the Kasai district, and, at an earlier date, Mr. Sjöblom in the Équateur district, whose mission fields have been intruded upon by rubber-collectors and tribute-collectors, or through the statements and admissions of agents and officials, like M. Moray in the Bangala district, whose sensibilities have not been sufficiently blunted for them to be willing perpetrators of the crimes expected from them, that the facts come to light. But there can be no doubt as to the treatment accorded to vast numbers of Congo natives, alike by the actual servants of the State and by the servants of the privileged companies in which the State is partner, with assistance from the *force publique*, now numbering 15,000, and from such armed auxiliaries as the Zapo-Zaps, who are scarcely less numerous. Enough evidence on the subject has been furnished.* Nor is it necessary here to follow in detail the military operations of 1900 and the following years in attempted suppression of the Batetela and other risings, which, in spite of all assertions to the contrary, were manifestly, from year to year becoming more and more extended and disastrous.

One of the most characteristic of the recent revolts, albeit quite local and short-lived, occurred in April, 1900 at Fort Shinkakasa, the stronghold erected on the Lower Congo for the protection of Boma and Matadi, in which such Batetela, Manyema, and other "rebels" as could be captured were put to convict labour. They had taken possession of the fortress, and had marched against Boma,

* The *Times*, of 2nd November, 1901, and other papers printed extracts from evidence said to have been tendered to the Brussels authorities by one of the trustiest agents of the Abir as to wholesale atrocities committed in various parts of the territory leased to it in the northern part of the Équateur district, one statement being that "in September, 1899, the whole of the Upper Bolombo region was put to fire and sword by the people of the Dikila factory, to force the natives with whom the Abir had not yet come in contact to collect rubber." The Abir had previously been regarded as, relatively, one of the

which they bombarded, and the police station of which they destroyed, before they were driven off, and they were only overtaken and defeated at Bulu, when they had covered half the road to Leopoldville.*

That small disturbance was easily suppressed, as were others in different parts of the territory. But nearly everywhere smouldering fires were ready to burst into flames, and explosive materials were merely waiting for sparks to set them alight. The announcement in January, 1901, that the Budja rising in the Bangala district had been "definitely suppressed" was followed in July by another admitting that the rebels had killed 250 of the State troops sent to further suppress them, but taking credit for their subsequent repulse. Great things were expected in August from the setting up of seven new military stations in this neighbourhood by a force sent down under Captain Mardulier; but in September all that could be boasted of was that the revolt was "not making any further headway."†

More troublesome, however, to the State, if not to the Société Anversoise, were the complications on the western side of the Welle district, where, late in 1900, the Ababua, neighbours of the Budja, and perhaps in collusion with them, rebelled and cut off all communications with the Lado *enclave*. When the details of this affair were reported it appeared that some 700 of them had captured the important trading and military station at Libokwa, which was garrisoned by forty-five State soldiers, and had carried off 48,000 cartridges and a vast store of merchandise, that the officer in charge of the stronghold was hiding some-

best managed of the Congo companies. In the same month, moreover, and in the following January appeared interviews with Mr. Edgar Canisius, an American citizen, and Captain Guy Burrows, a retired officer of the British army, as to their experiences in the Congo State's service—the former for five years in the Tanganyika and Mongala regions, and the latter for six years in the Luluaburg and other districts.

* *Times*, 3rd and 24th May, 1900.

† *Times*, 8th January, 19th July, 12th August, 19th September, 1901.

where, and that the force sent to relieve him had had to turn aside in the hope of suppressing an outbreak at Djabir. It was not till September and October, 1901, that news arrived that Lieutenant Lahaye, with a force of 600, had come to the rescue, and that, after some fighting, the Welle cannibals were "now completely pacified,"* pacification being really, it would seem, as unattainable as ever.

Katanga Expeditions.

But it was further south, throughout nearly the whole eastern part of the Congo State's territory, that its difficulties appear to have been greatest at this time. The so-called Batetela mutinies, identical in character, though ever changing as regards places and persons, were more embarrassing in and after 1900 than they had been in 1893. While smaller operations were conducted with varying fortunes in other districts, Captain de Wulf, who left Lusambo in October, 1900, on a punitive expedition against the main body of the rebels, then in the Katanga region, was reported in March, 1901, to have met and routed them near the Libudi, and to have, as was said six months later of the Welle region, "completely pacified" it. In April, however, elaborate preparations had to be made for further pacification, as at least a thousand Batetela were reported to be still at large, occupying the mountains south of Lake Kasali or Kisale, and overawing the natives into alliance with them. The command of a formidable expedition was entrusted to Major Malfeyt, who established himself with 700 troops at the confluence of the Lukuga with the Lualaba, about 150 miles north of Lake Kasali. Another force, 150 strong, under Captain Sannaes, was some sixty miles nearer to the lake, and a third, 200 strong, under Major Vandenbrock, was at Kilwa, on Lake Mweru, 160 miles to the east. In October news arrived that Major Malfeyt had won an overwhelming victory over the main body of the rebels, who were "not expected to give any

* *Times*, 8th January, 27th April, 17th September, 15th October, 1901.

further trouble."* Perhaps there was more than the usual warrant for this representation.

There were, at any rate, exceptional reasons for the enterprise here brought, as it was alleged, to a successful conclusion. The Compagnie du Katanga, founded in March, 1891, with a nominal capital of 3,000,000 francs, and trading rights over the vast area acquired for it by Captain Stairs and others in the following year, had not equalled or at all approached the financial prosperity of its great rivals. This, it may be assumed, was chiefly due to the unsettled condition of the country, which had never been really conquered, and since 1893 had been more or less in the hands of "rebels." In the hope of improving matters a bold scheme was started in July, 1900, for utilising the mineral and other wealth in which Katanga was supposed to abound. A Comité Spécial du Katanga, to all intents and purposes a State organisation, took over everything worth holding of the original company's rights and privileges, and was henceforth to have absolute control of the whole, on condition that two-thirds of any "advantages and benefits" derived from exploitation on the territory, as well as two-thirds of any expenses and losses incurred therein, should fall to the State, and one-third to the Compagnie du Katanga.† In order to carry out this plan an "administrative expedition" was sent out under Major Weyns, the founder of the *force publique* sixteen years before, who was to be the new director of Katanga, and who was accompanied by fifty "seasoned travellers." Leaving Antwerp on 19th January, 1901, and travelling by way of Zanzibar and Lake Tanganyika, he reached Pueto or Mpueto, at the head of Lake Mweru, on 24th May, and took formal possession of the country's steamers and ports on both lakes and in the adjacent country. It was to co-operate with Major Weyns, and to prepare for the trading, mining, and other operations confided to him,

* *Times*, 18th March, 24th July, 15th October, 1901.

† 'Bulletin Officiel,' 1901.

that Major Malfeyt had "conquered" the district near Lake Kasali.

The Rabinek Affair.

How the natives have fared under the new *régime* we have yet to learn. Of the treatment accorded to white men not in the employ of the Comité du Katanga we have illustration in the case of Herr Rabinek, an Austrian trader, associated with influential Hamburg merchants, who had for some years been dealing with the inhabitants in ivory and rubber, having his store at Kazembe, in the adjacent British Central African Protectorate, whence the goods were for the most part conveyed by way of Blantyre to the German markets. He was duly provided with the Congo States's licenses to trade and hunt elephants, as well as with a permit to carry thirty-nine guns for his own and his porters' use; for all of which privileges he paid, apparently, 2,060 francs or about 80*l.* a year. These documents were seen and found satisfactory, in September, 1900, by M. Gustave Levêque, at that time the Compagnie du Katanga's director in Africa, who also satisfied himself that Rabinek was acting within his rights. M. Levêque, moreover, obtained from Rabinek "information about the revolt on the Lualaba, whence he had returned," which, as he said, "confirmed the knowledge I already had as to this territory from which came much of the rubber sold by the natives outside the limits of the Congo, being inaccessible to any Congo State official." "Rabinek," he added, "and some Portuguese half-breeds, knowing the language of the country and living with the natives, alone could travel about there. The rubber for the Pueto station came chiefly from Lowule, two or three days' journey, which Europeans who were not officials could still visit with caution. The neighbourhood of Pueto, formerly abounding in rubber, no longer produced any, through lack of attention to the proper collection of the article—lack of attention mainly due to the natives' hostility to the Congo State officials. Considering the heavy expenses incurred

by the Compagnie du Katanga in providing stations and steamers, considering also the entire absence of rubber on Lake Tanganyika, and the difficulty of obtaining it on Lake Mweru in sufficient quantity to cover expenses, I agreed to the proposal of Rabinek that I should grant him a license to collect rubber in the rebel zone, subject to the payment of 10*l.* a year and of one franc per kilo of all rubber and ivory collected and passed through our hands before leaving the Congo; he also being bound to plant 150 rubber vines for every ton exported, in order to ensure the preservation of the industry. Rabinek reckoned on collecting 100 tons of rubber each year, which would have brought the company a profit of 100,000 francs per annum, without risk or outlay, at a time when we were not sufficiently manned or armed to go into the region in revolt." Accordingly, on 23rd September, 1900, M. Levêque entered into an agreement with Rabinek on the terms proposed, and the latter, sending an agent to Lowule to begin rubber-collecting in an honest way, went himself to Blantyre to arrange for the goods with which to make his purchases.*

That attempt at starting something like respectable and profitable trade with the natives in the "rebel zone" of Katanga, however, was soon upset, as a consequence of the establishment of the Comité Spécial du Katanga in July, 1900, and the sending out of Major Weyns as its manager in succession to M. Levêque. "Towards the end of October," M. Levêque reports, only about four weeks after the date of his agreement with Rabinek, "I received complaints from Rabinek's agents as to injuries and thefts they had incurred from the soldiers of the Congo State"; and on 7th November the first intimation reached him of the setting up of the Comité Spécial. It was followed, on

* M. Levêque's signed statement, dated from Abercorn, in Northern Rhodesia, on 12th August, 1901, from which extracts are made above, reached Europe in July, 1902. Much other information on the subject has been collected by Mr. E. D. Morel, and was published in *West Africa* on 26th July 1902, and later dates.

11th April, 1901, by a letter from the Compagnie du Katanga, dated 12th January, informing him that it refused to recognise the bargain he had made with Rabinek. On 20th April both Major Weyns and Rabinek arrived at a small station near Mtoa, on the Congo side of Lake Tanganyika, where M. Levêque was then staying, and he was able to show them the Company's letter. Before considering it, however, Major Weyns sent Rabinek to Kasongo, the German station on the other side of the lake, there to buy provisions and afterwards convey them to some of his party whom he had left on the way in a destitute condition; and, while this mission was being performed, the gallant Major paid a visit to Mtoa, whence he returned on 4th May to mysteriously announce that a warrant had been received from Boma for the arrest of a man who, after being taken, "lui ferait un si gentil petit voyage que celui-ci ne recommencerait pas, et que les autres s'en souviendraient." "He spoke afterwards of Rabinek," adds M. Levêque, "alleging that he had, in sending armed natives to hunt elephants in that region, supplied the rebels with arms."

The business was soon done. Proceeding from Mtoa to Pueto, where he arrived on 24th May, Major Weyns appears to have awaited the approach of the African Lakes Corporation's steamer, the *Scotia*, which was trading on Lake Mweru, and on which Rabinek was a passenger, returning from the errand entrusted to him. Before the passengers could land Rabinek was arrested—possibly in British waters—by order of Major Weyns, who thereupon took him back to Mtoa and had him tried under the warrant out against him. It seems that on 14th June he was condemned by the official acting as judge to a fine of 1,000 francs, the extreme punishment—with or without penal servitude for a month—which is assigned by law for illegal trading in rubber, but that Major Weyns insisted on the sentence including penal servitude for a term of twelve

months. Protesting against this monstrous ruling, Rabinek was sent towards Boma to make his appeal if he could. "This nice little voyage of which Major Weyns spoke, then," wrote M. Levêque, "was destined to Rabinek. It is to be hoped that he will be able to bear it, considering the way in which white men are treated by the soldiers of the State, even when there is no better warrant for their arrest than that which served as an excuse in the case of M. Van den Borch.* A similar journey from Mtoa to Boma means certain death." Rabinek, who himself wrote to his friends saying that he did not expect to reach Boma alive, and who left behind him property valued at 15,000*l.*, which was confiscated by the State authorities, did die on 1st September, on board the State steamer that was conveying him to the Lower Congo, the official explanation being that "he was attacked by fever which killed him," and that "he was not in a fit state to bear a strong attack of fever, as he was weakened by a long stay in the tropics and by abuse of morphia."

Whether there was any truth in the allegation that Rabinek, licensed to use thirty-nine cap guns in protecting his trade caravan and in elephant-hunting, had parted with some of his weapons to natives with whom the State was at war; whether any excuse can be found for his arrest on a British steamer, he being an Austrian subject, having business relations with German merchants in Hamburg, and licensed to trade with the natives of the region by the Compagnie du Katanga, whose responsibilities the Comité Spécial du Katanga took over; whether his death on the journey of more than 2,000 miles, for the purpose of appealing against an apparently illegal sentence, can be regarded as no more

* The case of M. Van den Borch, of which I can find no other mention, is thus related by M. Levêque. "He was several times aimed at by the soldiers of the State at Chiniama, then ill-treated by them in a shameful manner, then dragged as far as Lukafu, the black sergeant robbing him of his helmet, his machilla, and a goat which he had brought to feed upon, and giving him nothing but putrid meat. M. Van den Borch returned with a sunstroke and in a permanent state of fever, which had not left him last June."

than a deplorable accident — these and other questions arising out of his case are of international import and must be left for others to decide.* But the case is at least as striking and suggestive as was "the Stokes affair" more than five years earlier.†

* In answer to a question asked in the House of Commons by Sir Charles Dilke on 27th October, 1902, Lord Cranbourne replied, "Inquiries are being made, and on receipt of definite information His Majesty's Government will be in a position to consider what action should be taken in the matter."

† The annual report of the Compagnie du Katanga, issued on 19th November, 1902, while these pages are passing through the press, makes no mention of "the Rabinek affair," but boasts that "the occupation of the territory proceeds without slackening and in complete calm," by help of sixty-five white officials and a well-trained force of "police." "Relations with the natives," it is asserted, "are of the best, and the control of the Comité is effective and respected by all. Its associations with the State authorities, private individuals, and missionaries alike, are most cordial." In the second half of 1901, we are informed, 83,928 kilos of rubber and 1,377 kilos of ivory were collected.

CHAPTER XIII.

Belgium's Inheritance [1901-1902].

By the terms of the Convention of 3rd July, 1890, between King Leopold and the Belgian Government, Belgium had the opportunity, six months after the expiration of the ten and a half years over which the loan of 25,000,000 francs without interest was spread, of annexing the Congo State, with all its possessions and rights, and also with all its duties and liabilities. It was provided, moreover, that if this was not done the debt should only be recoverable after another period of ten years, but that interest should be paid on it at the rate of 3½ per cent. per annum. The actual debt had by that time swollen to 31,850,000 francs, by the addition of a loan of 6,500,000 francs, bearing interest, which had been illegally contracted by the Congo Government with a syndicate of Antwerp bankers in March, 1894, and for which the Belgian Parliament had been induced in June, 1895, to make itself responsible.

King Leopold's Bargain.

The time-limit expired on 2nd January, 1901, but, by general agreement, public discussion as to the course to be taken with reference to it was postponed until after Easter, and only actively begun in May.

Among those who took common ground in condemning the policy of the Congo Government and desiring a thorough change in it there was wide difference of opinion as to the expediency of the Belgian nation assuming direct and admitted responsibility for the management of an enormous territory in Africa, seventy times as large as Belgium itself; and unfortunately this difference of opinion greatly strengthened the hands of those who favoured the continuance of existing institutions, with all their abuses and abominations.

Belgium's Responsibility.

It was at the suggestion of influential members of the Belgian Parliament, and in the hope of supporting their action, that an appeal, dated 29th April, and including the names of Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Leonard Courtney, and Mr. Frederic Harrison among its eight representative signatures, was addressed to both Chambers on behalf of the Aborigines Protection Society. In this document the Chambers were urged to take adequate precautions towards securing "humane and equitable treatment of the native populations who are placed under the authority of the Congo State," and were reminded that, by participating in the General Acts of the Berlin and Brussels Conferences, and by entering into treaties with that State, Belgium had placed itself "under a moral obligation as regards the preservation of the native populations entrusted to the Congo State," and was already involved, "at any rate to the extent of responsibility for inaction, in whatever discredit and danger may result from any treatment of natives by the State which is contrary to the humane intentions of the Conferences of Berlin and Brussels." With reference to the Conventions of 1885 and 1890, it was pointed out, "the objection that Belgium may not 'interfere in any way with the administration of the Congo Free State,' and that 'the union between the two Crowns is strictly personal,' cannot prevail against the actual fact—known to the whole world and acknowledged in official documents—that the State is an outcome of the enterprise of the Belgian nation, and that all its extensions and all its progress have made more direct and more intimate the tie which unites it to Belgium, governed and administered as it is by Belgians, a field of Belgian enterprise, and a source of profit to Belgian capitalists." "The partnership between the two States appears to have been officially sealed by the fact that since 1889 Belgium has been recognised heir to the Sovereign of the State," it was added, and, "so long as this

partnership continues, its responsibilities are none the less shared by both parties to it because one of them is entrusted with the entire business of administration and the other merely participates indirectly in its political risks and its pecuniary gains."

This appeal was referred to a Special Commission—corresponding to a Select Committee of the British Parliament—which was appointed early in May to deal with the general question, and it was honoured by the blame as well as by the approval accorded to it in the discussions of that Commission and, subsequently, of the Chamber of Representatives. All efforts to materially alter the policy evidently resolved upon from the first were, however, unavailing.

Ministerial Proposals.

As a matter of form, at the commencement of deliberations, a Bill was introduced by the Belgian Government, on behalf of the Congo Government, vaguely declaring that "the reimbursement of the sums lent to the Congo State in terms of the Convention of 3rd July, 1890, and by virtue of the law of 29th June, 1895 as well as the payment of interest accruing on these sums, is suspended," and that, "should Belgium renounce its option of annexing the Congo State, the financial obligations incurred by the State by reason of the before-mentioned Acts will take effect."

This, however, was promptly followed by a proposal, put forward by Count de Smet de Naeyer, the Prime Minister, that the Convention of 1890 should merely be renewed for another ten years, without payment of the loan or any interest upon it being required, and without any provision being made for better management of the Congo State's affairs. "Without wishing to go so far as to dissuade the Chambers from immediate annexation," said the Prime Minister in his *exposé des motifs*, "the Government cannot ignore the fact that the country seems favourable to the idea of postponing a definite declaration until a future date. It is, indeed, impossible not to ask

seriously whether it would be expedient to modify the *régime* under which the State was organised and has since flourished. Could any other arrangement better satisfy the requirements of the Congo and our own national interests?"

M. Beernaert's Alternative.

It was as an alternative to Count de Smet de Naeyer's proposal that, at the end of May, M. Beernaert, the former Prime Minister who had been largely responsible for the Convention of 1885, as well as for the Convention of 1890, and who was now leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Belgian Chamber, introduced a Bill declaring the territories of the Congo State to be, by virtue of the second Convention, "henceforth the property of Belgium," and taking over "all prerogatives, rights, advantages, and sovereignty attaching thereto, together with all the responsibilities of the said State towards third parties," but allowing two years for the preparation of "a special *régime*, in its legislative, administrative, and judicial aspects, for the new Belgian possessions," and directing that, "during the said two years, the Government of the territories shall be carried on under the same conditions as at present."

King Leopold's Ultimatum.

Adoption of M. Beernaert's measure would have afforded opportunity for the gradual contriving and ultimate carrying out of any reforms in the management of Congo affairs which the Belgian Parliament might have the will or the power to insist upon; but, besides being distasteful to those Radicals who objected to the conversion of King Leopold's African realm into a Belgian possession, it was resented by King Leopold himself, who, if he had ever thought seriously of making the surrender in his lifetime, was now deriving from his speculation profits too welcome to be readily parted with. Accordingly, the proceedings of the Special Commission were interrupted on 11th June by the reading of a letter from His Majesty to M. Woeste, the

leader of the Catholic party. "If annexation is actually voted before the time arrives when the State is able to assure to Belgium all the advantages which I desire shall accrue to it," the King wrote, as Sovereign of the Congo State, "the Congo Administration will naturally refuse to participate in a hybrid government which can only produce, both internally and externally, friction and loss. Is it conceivable that a State can be annexed and yet compelled to carry on its government *ad interim?* For it must be acknowledged that Belgium is not ready for such a step, and is at the moment unable to provide a substitute for the present Administration."

The effrontery of this message was amazing, and no one can have been deceived by the quibble raised in it. Had the Congo State been at war with Belgium and in danger of conquest by it, there might have been reason in the threat that all the existing machinery for keeping order in the territory would be broken up unless fair terms, acceptable to the conquered, were offered. But there was no semblance of conquest in this case. King Leopold was merely asked to comply with the conditions proposed by himself in his will of 2nd August, 1899, and in his letter of the same month to M. Beernaert, and with the obligations his Congo Government had taken upon itself in the Convention of 3rd July, 1890, and had endorsed by later documents. Belgium, besides being heir to the King, was in the position of a creditor entitled to receive from him either the money lent and now overdue or, as a "going concern," the property tendered as security for the loan. The King's attitude was no more honest than would have been that of a humbler mortgager who, when invited to fulfil his bond, threatened to destroy the thing he had mortgaged rather than give it up.

His high-handed procedure, however, achieved its immediate object. M. Beernaert's scheme, regarded by himself and his friends as an equitable and statesmanlike compromise, by which two years would have been allowed for settling the details of the transfer without injury either to

the outgoing or to the incoming holders of the Congo State's territory, had to be withdrawn, and all he could procure was insertion in Count de Smet de Naeyer's Bill of a clause declaring and confirming the right of Belgium to take possession of the property on the king's death, if not at an earlier date. "If you do not annex to-day," he said when the Bill was passed by a majority of seventy-one votes to thirty-one in the Chamber of Representatives on 17th July, "I fear that you will never annex, and that international complications may arise which will render impossible the annexation of the Congo at any time by Belgium." It was at the same sitting that M. Vandevelde, who with M. Georges Lorand took the chief part in opposing the project, quoted the following sentences from a leading Catholic journal: "Gratitude is not a royal virtue. That is shown once again by the conduct of Leopold II. toward his eminent, old and faithful servant, Minister of State Beernaert. The King has already forgotten that to M. Beernaert he owes his possession of the Congo. If in 1885, at the time of the Berlin Conference, Frère-Orban had been in power, Leopold II. would never have become Sovereign of the Congo Free State. It was M. Beernaert who, by his heated discourse to the Chamber and the Senate, brought the majority, and afterwards the nation, into their present liking for a colonial policy. And, for reward, we now see the King in league with his most violent adversary against him! Alas! Alas!" The adversary, of course, was M. Woeste, a German Jew by birth, now the zealous champion of the Catholic party in Belgium, and, it is notorious, having a compact with King Leopold, in accordance with which everything done or desired by the Congo Government within its own area receives the unquestioning and untiring support of the Catholics, in return for a like support given to their resistance of Socialists, Radicals, and Liberals in home affairs.

The upshot of the controversy over Count de Smet de Naeyer's Bill, which the Belgian Senate sanctioned on

6th August by fifty-four votes to six, was a fresh Convention between the Belgian and Congo Governments, leaving the control of the Congo State's affairs in the present hands, on the understanding that after the King's death, unless an earlier date may be agreed upon, it shall become a Belgian "colony." As an adjunct to this Convention, moreover, a "*loi organique* or administrative *régime*," dated 7th August, 1901, was issued, subject to the approval of the Belgian Parliament, which appears to have been since quietly taken for granted. By the terms of the document, absolute legislative and executive control of the colonial possessions of Belgium—that is, of the Congo State, in the event of transfer ever taking place—is, as heretofore, to be vested in the King, the Colonial Minister appointed as his chief adviser and agent, with a seat in the Belgian Cabinet, being nominated and only removable by him. This Minister is to be assisted by a Colonial Council of four members, also the mere nominees of the King, two of whom "must have already served in a judicial, military or administrative capacity in the colonial possessions, or have participated in the management of an industrial or commercial establishment there." Thus all that has been proposed is the strengthening and systematising of the existing autocratic machinery. One clause, it is true, provides that "a report on the administration of colonial possessions shall be submitted annually to the Chambers," that "this report must contain the fullest information necessary to enlighten the national taxpayers as to the political, economic, financial, and moral condition of those possessions," and that "the Chambers will have full liberty to discuss the acts of the Administration." According to another clause, moreovor, although "the King makes treaties concerning colonial possessions," and need do no more than "inform the Chambers of such treaties, so soon as the interest and safety of the colony allow it," it is provided that "commercial treaties which may tend to become a charge upon

The Congo State's New Lease.

public finances, or may affect individual interests, are only valid after receiving the assent of the Chambers," and that "the Minister for Foreign Affairs controls in his department the relations of the colonial possessions with Foreign Powers." But, as regards the general interests alike of the Congo natives, of the Belgian public, and of other Europeans, it is intended that there shall be practically no restraint on the despotic authority of the Sovereign of the State, or on the tyranny of his political agents and commercial partners. If ever the *loi organique* of 1901 comes into operation the Congo State may throw on the Belgian people far greater risks and burdens than they have yet incurred; but all its profits will still be reserved for its Sovereign and his favourites.

The International Issues.

As Belgium, while accepting, as it was constrained to do, the renewed promise or pretence that the Congo State should ultimately be annexed to it, has also consented to abstain from all control over its inheritance, the duty of insisting on proper management of the State's affairs remains with the other Powers responsible for the violated prescriptions of the Berlin and Brussels General Acts.

It was in the hope of arousing the British Government to a sense of its share in the responsibility, and in continuance of appeals to the same intent in previous years, that the Aborigines Protection Society, in a letter dated 2nd August, 1901, urged it to take measures "towards securing the co-operation of the other signatory Powers in upholding the provisions of the Acts in question, if necessary by proposing that another International Conference shall be convened at an early date." More detailed was yet another appeal from the Society dated 27th March, 1902, including "a very brief review of the policy hitherto pursued by the administrators of the Congo State, by legislation and in practice, and of the consequent disasters to its Congolese subjects." "Surely," it was urged, in the concluding sentence of this review, "the time has arrived for inquiry

to be instituted, and for suitable remedial measures to be taken, by the civilised Powers who, as signatories to the Berlin General Act, which provided the Congo State with its opportunities for wrong-doing, are sharers in its responsibilities and, so long as they knowingly tolerate that wrong-doing, must be regarded as accomplices in it." "The offences complained of appear to be now greater and more widespread that formerly," it was pointed out, moreover, "and, as an arrangement was come to last year by the Government of the Congo State with the Government and Parliament of Belgium, by which the existing relations between them were continued indefinitely, but with an increased prospect of the Congo State being before long converted into a Belgian possession, there might be great advantage in the necessary reforms in the administration of native affairs being effected, if possible, before the probable change takes place."

In support of that appeal, in response to which the British Government has promised to take such action as it may find practicable, and which received considerable backing on commercial grounds from several Chambers of Commerce, as well as from influential newspapers, not only in Great Britain, but also in Germany, the United States, and elsewhere, a public meeting was held in the London Mansion House on 15th May. At this meeting, presided over by Mr. Alfred E. Pease, the weightiest speech was made by Sir Charles Dilke, who was followed by Sir Mark Stewart, by Mr. John Holt and Mr. F. Swanzy, as representatives of the Liverpool and London Chambers of Commerce, and by others. Its importance was not lessened by the presence of two self-invited delegates from the Congo Government, one of whom, Mr. R. D. L. Mohun, a District Commissary of varied experience on the Congo, claimed to be the bearer of a message from King Leopold to the effect that "the Government of the Congo State will open an inquiry into any of the charges which may be brought specifically before it by the Aborigines Protection Society, and will assist in

every way to stop what they consider to be the bad things going on in the Congo Free State." *

It is not necessary here, in so far as facts concealed as far as possible have come to light, to set forth the events of Congo State history in 1902. They have been substantially little more than repetitions, with variations in time and place, of the occurrences of previous years, which have been sufficiently narrated. There have been fitful risings and constant oppressions of natives in nearly all portions of the territory. There have been further extensions of the *domaine privé* system, and the granting of monopolies under it, especially in the Kasai district, and the enterprise of the privileged companies, old and new, has certainly not slackened, although, through increasing difficulties in the collection of rubber, which now constitutes in value nearly seven-eighths of all the produce exported, their profits have been notably reduced. Hence the speculative value of the shares issued by the privileged companies has, in some cases, fallen to less than half the amount reached in their palmier days. For all that, however, it was reckoned in August, 1902, that the aggregate of the shares held by the State alone in those companies might have been sold for 80,000,000 francs, or nearly thrice the 28,709,000 francs estimated for the entire revenue of the State in 1902. The State is still a valuable asset to its Sovereign and his partners; and others besides financiers and financial gamblers have been enriched by it. Throughout the past decade and more it has vastly augmented the commerce of Antwerp and the

The Latest Developments.

* The actual telegram was quite different in its purport. Mr. Mohun's inaccuracy was in keeping with the usual tactics of the Congo State and of its hirelings. The message was a defiance, not a promise, and ran as follows:—"Pouvez déclarer que Gouvernement Congo ouvrira enquête judiciaire sévère sur tout delit porté à sa connaissance. Loi Congolaise, pas plus que loi autre pays, ne permet ingérence de tiers dans action judiciaire." Count de Smet de Naeyer had, in like manner, thrown down an evasive challenge in addressing the Belgian Chamber in July, 1901:—"Un de vos auteurs," he

general trade of Belgium, especially in ivory carving, as well as in the manufacture of rubber goods and other industries. Yet prudent and patriotic Belgians, even if they are not troubled with humane considerations, may well ask whether the Congo possessions to which their country is ostensibly the heir are worth having.

And none of the other nations responsible for the setting up of the Congo State, in 1884, and for its continuance with ever-growing violation of the conditions under which it was allowed to take shape, can be deterred by mercenary considerations from regarding in their true light the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name of civilisation. Nearly the whole of such commerce as is carried on in the Congo State's territory is for the benefit of but a small section of the Belgian population. Of the 2,346 white or European inhabitants of the State's territory accounted for at the beginning of 1902, 1,465, and nearly all the holders of military and other important positions, were Belgians. Amongst the rest were 156 Italians, 155 Swedes, Norwegians or Danes, 126 Dutch, 108 Portuguese, 90 English, 63 Germans, and 55 Frenchmen.

Many, too many, names of Englishmen, and others who are not Belgians, appear in the shareholders' lists of the Congo companies, but all the signatories to the Berlin Act, with the exception of the Congo State, and perhaps of Belgium, have suffered more or less from the flagrant disregard and perversion of the free trade provisions of that Act. The State's actual neighbours in Africa, its partners in the occupation of the Congo Basin, have suffered too, more or less, both from the dangers incident to contact with it and from the pernicious example set by it.

said, "semble être la Société pour la Protection des Indigènes, qui, sous couleur de philanthropie, attaque périodiquement des institutions Congolaises. Si cette association connaît des faits précis d'actes de pouvoir et de cruauté, pourquoi ne les défère-t-elle pas au Gouvernement du Congo et aux tribunaux compétents? Au lieu de cela, on préfere rester dans le vague et livrer à la publicité des accusations trop générales pour être saissibles. Pareils procédés permettent de juger le but et le degré de véracité de ces dénonciations."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Congo State's Neighbours.

THE proceedings of the Congo State in the main portion of the Congo Basin entrusted to its care—about two-thirds of the whole—have been far more momentous than those of its British, French, German, and Portuguese neighbours and partners or rivals within the same vaguely defined area. Brief mention of these contemporary movements, and of the questions incident to them, however, must now be made.

British Congoland.

The Congo State had been in existence for six years before Great Britain acquired any footing in the Congo Basin, apart from the trade and other relations that had been unofficially established by British settlers or visitors near the mouth of the great river. It was only in 1890 that German enterprise, more or less connected with or consequent upon the pretended rescue of Emin Pasha, induced the British East Africa Company to enter on enough "effective occupation" of Uganda to satisfy international requirements. Even after that date Captain Lugard and subsequent administrators were sufficiently engaged in settling and unsettling matters in Uganda itself, without troubling themselves about the western parts of the protectorate which were within the Congo Basin, until complications arose in the Ankole and Toru districts, between Lakes Victoria Nyanza and Albert Edward, and northward through the Semliki valley up to Lake Albert Nyanza, as a result of Baron Dhanis's raiding and crusading in the Arab Zone in 1892 and 1893. Unable or not caring to discriminate between Belgians and British, the natives were encouraged in defiance of all whites by the news that reached them as to the doings of the Congo State's forces

on the east of the Lualaba. These complications lasted till 1897, and they were then revived by Captain Chaltin's successful march to Lado, and yet more by Baron Dhanis's unsuccessful attempt to follow him. The supposed expediency of Congo State co-operation with Great Britain in opposing the Mahdists of the north, as well as the sympathisers with them among the Batetela, Manyema, and others, if not also their Arab teachers and oppressors, in the south, was one of the grounds for Lord Rosebery's ill-advised lease of the Lado *enclave* to King Leopold in 1894, and conduced to many subsequent embarrassments. With the expulsion of some of the Batetela or Manyema mutineers from Toru by Major Ternan in June, 1897, and the establishment of firmer British rule which followed, the difficulties consequent thereon on that side of the Uganda Protectorate practically ended. But like difficulties have been growing ever since in the north-west.

Whatever faults may be found in British methods of conquest and administration, as shown in Uganda and other parts of British East Africa and also in the Egyptian Sudan, they are by no means open to equal censure with the methods of the Congo Government. It is on every ground deplorable, therefore, that by blundering statesmanship and inexplicable submission to the versatile requirements of the Belgian King, in his capacity of Congo Sovereign, the British authorities should have enabled so much confusion to be caused and so many seeds of mischief to be planted during the past few years in the Bahr-el-Ghazal region and thereabouts. But, the scene of these errors being outside the Congo Basin, bare reference to them, in incidental illustration of the general course of Congoland wrong-doing, is all that would be proper here.

Having Great Britain for a neighbour and an ally over a long stretch of its north-eastern territory, from Lake Albert Edward up to and round the Lado *enclave*, the Congo State is in contact with the same neighbour again

on the south-east, from the extremity of Lake Tanganyika round to the southern frontier of the Katanga and Kasai districts, which in 1891 Mr. Cecil Rhodes was foiled in an attempt to acquire. Very little, however, has since, till lately, been done in the small sections of British Central Africa under the rule of the British South Africa Company which form part of Congoland. It was only in 1901 that Mr. Robert Codrington, the Commissioner for Northern Zambezia, entered on preliminary arrangements for turning this region to account, and found in the chaotic condition of the country on the other side of the border grave obstacles to be overcome. "There is no trade, properly so called, on the Congo coast of Tanganyika," he reported in 1902, on returning from a tour of inspection, "but all rubber and ivory are regarded as the property of the State, and have to be surrendered by the natives in fixed quantities annually. The natives are, however, continually in rebellion, and the country is unsafe except in the immediate vicinity of the military garrisons and within the sphere of the influence of the missionaries."* Perhaps the revelations growing out of "the Rabinek affair" will lead to some improvement in administrative institutions affecting the position of natives, as well as of white traders, on both sides of Lake Mweru and throughout this part of Congoland.

German Congoland.

Between the southernmost points of Lakes Tanganyika and Albert Edward, the limits of the two British protectorates, and constituting the westernmost portion of German East Africa, is German Congoland, chiefly separated from the Congo State's territory by water, but not on that account free from disputes as to frontier. The controversy as to the rights of the two States in respect of Lake Kivu has not yet been ended, and no treaties can be expected to lessen the inevitable rivalry that has here grown up. The earliest European traders throughout the southern half of the

* *Geographical Journal*, May, 1902, p. 601.

Congo Basin were the Portuguese, or natives claiming to be Portuguese on account of the slight admixture of white blood descending to them. Their commerce, chiefly in slaves and fire-arms, had its outlets both on the Atlantic side of the continent, where it is still maintained, and on the Pacific coast. Much of the East African trade with Congoland, however, passed into the hands of the Germans while King Leopold's project was in its initial stages, and was almost limited to efforts at draining the country of its wealth by way of the Congo river. The appropriation of all such wealth within the Arab Zone, much larger supplies of which were being conveyed by so-called Arabs through German territory to Mombasa and Zanzibar than by so-called Portuguese to Mozambique, was manifestly the real though unavowed motive for Baron Dhanis's famous expedition; and the overthrow of Arab power which it effected, while breaking down the slave trade in that part of Africa, by no means put an end to the ivory trade formerly associated therewith. There would have been good grounds for Congo State complaints as to German violation of the arms and ammunition clauses of the Brussels General Act had not those clauses been violated at least as unscrupulously by the Congo State itself in its dealings with the native chiefs, from Katanga up to the Niam Niam country, whom it bribed and coaxed into its service as oppressors of other natives. But, whatever may have been done in the past, there are welcome signs of improvement in the German administration which of late years has been established in much more orderly and comprehensive ways than heretofore, with greater firmness as well as humaner policy, on the eastern side of Lake Tanganyika and up to the Uganda Protectorate. This improvement adds weight to the reasonable demands of the German authorities that there shall be equal justice in the control of the adjacent Congo State territory, and that the free trade provisions of the Berlin General Act shall no longer be disregarded with impunity.

Portuguese Congoland.

There is yet more need for reform, both parties being alike to blame, along the zig-zag stretch of territory that includes Portuguese Congoland and the Congo State as neighbours. Except as regards the small Kabinda *enclave*, to the north of the Congo river, Portuguese Congoland is now limited to the block of territory, also comparatively small, which has its sea frontage between Ambriz and the mouth of the Congo and extends inland to the Congo State's Kwango district. Albeit the site of the ancient "kingdom of Congo," this fragment of the unprofitable and ill-managed Angola possession of Portugal is even less profitable and appears to be even worse-managed than are the much larger provinces in the south. Whatever prospect there might have been of healthy revival for Portuguese Africa, and healthy development of other European intercourse with the Congo Basin, from adoption of the proposed Anglo-Portuguese Convention of 1884 — which was abandoned in favour of the proposals put into shape by the Berlin Conference, with such force as a General Act could give them — the working or the perversion of the Berlin Act has been fatal to Angola.

Until the Congo State railway from Matadi to Leopoldville was completed in 1898, as has already been mentioned, there appears to have been a constant migration of Bakongo and other natives across the frontier into Portuguese territory, in order that they might thus escape from the killing tyranny to which they were subjected by their new masters. Here, however, it is to be feared, their troubles were not much lightened. Though scarcely any attempt has ever been made to establish in this district even so much "civilisation" as is to be found further south, at San Paolo de Loanda and Benguela, the inhabitants—known as Mushikongo—have for generations been exposed to the influences, aggravating their savagery, which have come to them from the supply of rum, the staple commodity of

Angola, and the procuring of slaves for the manufacture of that product as well as for sale abroad.

The Transatlantic slave trade was prohibited and well-nigh abolished long ago, and slavery no longer exists under that name; but forced labour, equivalent to slavery, is still the rule, and is abundantly employed both in the cultivated portions of Angola and in the more prosperous St. Thomas's Island and Prince's Island, Portuguese possessions in the Atlantic, to the west of French Congoland. This labour—for some time obtained chiefly by the compulsory engagement of *serviçaes*, under contracts for five years, and also by *resgates*, or ransoms, paid to slave-dealers who had brought natives from the interior—was in 1899 supplemented by means of a Royal Decree, under which, as Mr. Nightingale, the British Consul at Loanda, reported in that year, "vagrant natives, and such as cannot prove that they have any means of livelihood as labourers carriers, artisans, &c., render themselves liable to be sentenced to a term of corrective labour (*trabalho correccional*)." There appears to be no difficulty in procuring such "corrective labour" seeing that, "to ensure the better carrying out of this law, a gratuity is offered to all persons, including native chiefs and heads of villages, for each vagrant or vagabond presented to the authorities." Most of the "ransomed labour" is brought from distant parts, especially from the old hunting-grounds of the old slave-raiders, the Kasai and Katanga regions, now under the Congo State, and it is conveyed across Angola, by the old slave caravan route, past Bihe, to Loanda and Benguela. Much of the "corrective labour" is doubtless obtained by seizure of the luckless fugitives from Congo State oppression in the Boma and Matadi districts. Of the quantity of either, and also of the "contracted labour" used up in the colony itself, there is no record. But between 1875 and 1896, according to the British consular reports, "22,140 contracted *serviçaes* left the ports of Angola for the islands of San Thomę and Principe to work on the plantations

there," and these were followed by 1,919 in 1897, by 3,131 in 1898, and by 3,648 in 1899. "This emigration," according to Consul Nightingale, "is a great drain on the province, and the planters in Cazengo and other parts complain very bitterly of it, as they are unable to offer such high sums for the *resgates* as the richer planters in the above-mentioned islands. A good healthy man and woman cost at the present time"—that is, in 1899—"about £50 sterling, placed in San Thome. This seems very much like quoting for cattle or any other marketable commodity. Such quotations are made, and contracts are signed, to deliver so many pairs at so much per pair."*

If there is less slavery in the Kabinda *enclave*, on the other side of the Congo mouth, where more flourishing, if not less degrading, trade is carried on than in other parts of Portuguese Congoland, the "blessings of civilisation" have not made the natives' lot happier. "Boatmen and sailors are supplied from the Kabindas, who hire themselves as Krumen do on the north coast," wrote Consul Hopkinson in 1874; "there is, in fact, a great similarity in these tribes, both being fearless and experienced boatmen." Commenting on this remark, Consul Casement, Mr. Nightingale's predecessor, said in 1899, "However true of that day, the comparison does not hold good now. The Kabindas, as a tribe, have retrograded since 1874, not only in physical characteristics, but morally, and above all in actual numbers. A visit to Kabinda and a week's sojourn there would convince any unprejudiced observer that the deterioration is due very largely to drink." "So recognised is the evil of trading in drink," he added, after describing one of his visits, "that every trader with whom I came in contact—they were both Dutch and English—assured me that a compulsory prohibition of alcohol would be the most welcome measure the Government could adopt, and the one best calculated ultimately to benefit their trade. To

* Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 2,363, 2,555, and 2,721.

take from a race of savages large and profitable consignments of what their country affords, and to leave them highly brutalised, or in no way morally improved, by their share in the transaction is not, whatever balance-sheets may show, a lasting good business. As they are improved, not degraded, by their contact with the white races, so will our dealings with the natives of Africa prove more profitable."*

French Congoland.

That warning is all the more worthy of attention because it has been so often uttered and so often ignored or defied. Its wisdom is being proved most conspicuously by the impolitic action of the Congo State throughout at least a dozen years, and now, in smaller measure, throughout four years or so, by adoption of Belgian tactics in French Congoland, which covers by far the largest portion of the third of the Congo Basin not monopolised by the Congo State. This region—which, it should be borne in mind, forms only a part of the territory marked in the maps as "Congo Français"—has a sea-frontage stretching from the Kabinda frontier up to the parallel of 2·30 north latitude, and extends inland, according to the Berlin General Act, "until it reaches the geographical basin of the Congo, avoiding the basin of the Ogowe." Eastward and northward of it is "Ubangi Français."

France owes its slice of Congoland to the enterprise of M. de Brazza, who was allowed to control its affairs honestly and judiciously till 1897, when he was relieved in the governorship of the colony by M. de Lamothe. In November, 1901, reasonably disturbed and alarmed by the course that events had taken in the interval, M. de Brazza made a memorable confession of faith. "France," he then wrote, "has assumed a duty towards the native tribes of French Congoland who for twenty-seven years have lent her their assistance in the work of expansion. These people have received from us the seal of their future liberties. We must not sacrifice them to the vain hope of

* Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 2,363.

immediate results by thoughtless measures of coercion, at variance with the generous ideas that our flag symbolises. We should be committing a great mistake in weakening that result by, at the present time, imposing taxes on the products of the soil, or by compelling the natives to work in the form of forced labour or military service. Our dignity would be greatly injured if such labour and such taxes were supplied at the beck and call of *concessionnaires*." "It is to bring these considerations to men's minds," he added "and to avert the moral bankruptcy to which economic and financial disasters may lead us, that I have emerged from the reserve I had imposed upon myself."*

French Congoland had been happy in having comparatively no history for thirteen years. The main object of its founders had been achieved by acquisition of the territory, and the "work of expansion" there accomplished had made it sufficiently serviceable as a ground of vantage for further expansions. Trading establishments had been set up by French merchants at Libreville, the political capital of the whole colony, and on the Ogowe, outside the Congoland area, and also at Loango and elsewhere within the Congo limits; but far more enterprise was shown by the two Liverpool firms of Messrs. Hatton & Cookson, and Messrs. John Holt & Co. From the first this enterprise was encouraged and found useful by the French authorities; and M. de Brazza's policy towards natives throughout his governorship appears to have been one of tolerance and protection, provided they submitted themselves, as was mainly to their advantage, to the paternal system of French rule. In 1897, however, a change occurred in French colonial policy, under M. Guillain, the new Minister for the Colonies in M. Méline's Cabinet. A decree for the administrative reorganisation of the French Congo was issued on 28th September, and M. de Lamothe was sent out to replace M. de Brazza as Commissary-General.

Though other causes conduced to this revolution, it was

* *Le Temps*, 17th November, 1901.

manifestly connected with contemporary developments in Congo State policy, and with the approaching completion of the Matadi-to-Leopoldville railway which was opened in 1898. After attending that ceremony in June, M. Pierre Mille crossed over to Brazzaville, said to have the best harbour on Stanley Pool, and he sorrowfully contrasted the easy-going procedure that he saw there with the bustling progress he had just parted from. "Among our people," he said, "individual enterprise is admirable; but collective enterprise and practical skill in turning energy to account are lacking." Recognising the faults of Congo State rule, he still admired its theory. Admitting that French methods should not and could not be a counterpart of Belgian methods, he yet envied the outcome of the latter. "Here," he said, "the problem is embarrassing. On the other side of the Congo, the lessor and the exploiter has been King Leopold. It is, in fact, a single individual who manages the business. A Parliament has no such opportunities, and State exploitation among us would probably arouse too many susceptibilities, and lead to inconveniences not to be played with. The gravest would be the constant interference of political bodies at home with colonial administration. If this danger could be avoided, I do not see, after all, why we should not do to-day what the Dutch have long been doing in Australasia. At any rate, in these absolutely new countries we ought to assist and guide private initiative. We ought to commence by organising a service of agriculture, and that will be a small thing to do if the Government does not take on itself the responsibility of wholesale exploitation by the State. Failing that, it should at least entrust the responsibility to others strong enough to bear it; it should lease the soil to societies having capital enough to be able to wait some time for their reward. That is to say, for experiments too small to be successful should be substituted collective enterprise, without which nothing can be done in regions so vast and so new. That is what has happened

in the Leopoldian Congo, and I should like the example to be followed. Otherwise, in our Congo there will be nothing to be found in a few years' time but virgin forests. That will be interesting. Cook's tourists will come here, and will spout pages from Ruskin congratulating us on our reverence for nature and our regard for hippopotami, but they will take care not to imitate us."*

The Concessionnaire System.

These sentences reveal the genesis of the *concessionnaire* system as it took shape in other parts of French Africa as well as in the French share of the Congo Basin. On 28th March, 1899, at the instigation of M. Guillain, three memorable decrees were signed by President Loubet—one laying down the "conditions d'octroi des concessions," another providing for the "exploitations des forêts," and a third, more elaborate, establishing a "régime foncier" for the French Congo.†

"Lands vacant and without masters," it was laid down in the first, "form part of the State domain," and, unless otherwise ordered, the proceeds of their alienation, by sale or lease under concession, are to be applied in defraying the expenses of colonisation, including the introduction of settlers and of workmen, either free or subject to a "régime de l'immigration," and the recruitment, armament, and maintenance of the police forces necessary for the safety of the settlers. The State domain in French Congo-land corresponds to the *domaine privé* of the Congo State, except that it is regarded as the property of the nation, not of one individual.

Of kindred purport was the decree concerning the exploitation of forests, which assumes ownership by the State, with power to alienate them, of all "bois domaniaux," with the exception of recognised "bois particuliers." In this second decree it is stipulated that "natives shall

* 'Au Congo Belge,' pp. 135, 140-142.

† All these are printed, and easily accessible, as an appendix to M. Mille's 'Au Congo Belge,' pp. 266-303.

retain, in the woods and forests of the domain, and also in those belonging to particular individuals, all the customary rights (asylum, wood cutting, pasturage, hunting, &c.) which they have hitherto enjoyed"; but the equitable provision is seriously hampered, if not made worthless, by the condition that "woods and forests may be freed from all customary rights, subject to a cantonment"—or what is usually termed "a native reserve" in English—"being provided, which shall be approved by the Commissary-General."

It may be reasonably argued that, in the very fact of monopolies and privileges of every sort being prohibited by the Berlin Act throughout the Congo Basin, there is excuse, if not necessity, for the assumption by the French Government of such lordship over all vacant and forest lands as will enable it to safeguard the interests of the native community and to secure fair play for all outsiders having dealings with the people. That is the policy wisely pursued—when it is not abused—in British possessions, under the Torrens Act, as it is called. But the responsibilities and obligations taken upon itself by any Government adopting this policy are enormous; as, also, are the opportunities and facilities for disregarding and violating them. If in the much smaller area of French Congoland, and in the yet shorter time that the evil has had for growing, the malpractices which have there come into vogue by no means equal the similar misdeeds in Belgian Congoland, they are very alarming and most reprehensible.

Since the summer of 1899 more than half of the French Congo, chiefly within the Congo Basin, has been parcelled out into huge concessions among upwards of forty companies, of which a few have already collapsed, but of which others claim to be rivalling the commercial or financial success, as they are certainly emulating the vices, of the great Congo State companies. It is significant that these companies, albeit French in name, have been mainly instigated and encouraged by Colonel Thys and other Belgian promoters and that several of them—notably, the

Comptoir Colonial Français, which is the parent of the Compagnie Français du Congo and five other organisations, with an aggregate capital of nearly 10,000,000 francs—are as much under Belgian as under French management. Though most of the capital has been subscribed in Paris, guidance as to its disposal comes from Brussels; with some restraint it is true, seeing that the French Government can scarcely tolerate such cruelty to natives and injustice to others as are sanctioned, if not prompted, by the Congo Government, "French Congo," M. Jean Hess, an eminent authority on French colonial questions, wrote in 1901, "has been divided into a certain number of territorial concessions, which were given to French *concessionnaires*, who formed companies that ought to have been French. The French financial world believed that the exploitation of French Congo would immediately result in enormous profits, as in the case of the Belgian companies. But it was forgotten that the prosperity of the Belgian companies was due to barbarous methods, to slavery and every abuse, every crime, which this odious custom inevitably entails. To-day the knowledge is historical. It is proved up to the hilt that the Belgians, in order to obtain ivory and rubber from the Congo, have perpetrated abominations, and that to his title of King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Congo State His Majesty might add King of the Slave Dealers. Our colonial administration is not admirable; but it could not allow the barbarity of King Leopold's agents to be imported into the territories of the Republic." Writing while the French Colonial Minister was M. Décrais, in M. Waldeck Rousseau's Cabinet, M. Hess added, "An active campaign is being carried on to compel M. Décrais to force the natives to collect rubber and to bring that rubber to the *concessionnaires*, and, as part of the arrangement, these good *concessionnaires* want M. Décrais to quarter all over the Congo sufficient police forces to see that not a single Negro escapes working for their exclusive profit. For a long time past the word of the agents of

King Leopold has been law here in Paris, thanks to the interested complicity of a few contemptible persons. It seems to me that their audacity is getting beyond bounds, and that it is time to call a halt."*

M. Décrais, while he remained in office, appears to have done all he found practicable in lessening the hardships of the natives; but his efforts in this direction have been of small avail, and meanwhile the English and other traders, whose dealings with the natives of the French Congo were of much longer standing and far wider scope than those of French or Belgian *concessionnaires*, have been treated with shameless injustice. In defiance of international law, or by perversion of the forms of law, they have been practically excluded from the country, and everything possible has been and is being done to force the natives on the north side of the Congo into bondage as pitiless and ruinous as that established in the south.

The decree of March, 1899, concerning "exploitations des forêts," promised to the natives continuance of their customary rights to use of these woods and forests, subject to suitable cantonments or reserves being marked out for their exclusive enjoyment; and a subsequent decree provided that "the area of the lands in permanent occupation by natives, or those temporarily and successively occupied by them, shall be fixed by the instructions of the Governor of the colony, who will also appoint the areas reserved for hunting and fishing." In accordance with this decree a circular was on 26th March, 1901, sent out by the Governor to the administrators of the several districts under his control, inviting from each of them "clear and precise information as to the state of affairs in his district, and

* An article in *La Petite République*, cited in 'Trading Monopolies in West Africa' (1901, p. 50), by Mr. E. D. Morel, to whom I am indebted not only for the information given in this pamphlet, but for his numerous communications on Congo affairs in *West Africa* and other publications. Much of this matter is embodied and supplemented in a volume on 'Affairs of West Africa,' which he has just published (December, 1902).

suggestions for the orders to be issued as regards native reserves within it"; but the same circular declared that "all the produce of the conceded territory, whatever it is, is the property of the *concessionnaire* company, whose agents alone have the right to collect or buy that produce from the natives"; that "these natives can only dispose freely of the produce of the reserves specially assigned to them"; and that, "if they are in possession of any produce obtained elsewhere, they must surrender it to the *concessionnaires*, whose interest of course it will be to recompense them for their labour."* The promised reserves have not been marked out; but the order obliging the natives to sell to none but agents of the *concessionnaire* companies any produce not obtained from the reserves hereafter to be assigned to them is in force.

The natives of French Congoland have thus been as completely deprived of their land-rights as their fellow victims under the Congo State, and, as regards "recompence for their labour" in collecting rubber and other articles, are at the mercy of the only people with whom they are allowed to have dealings. They have not yet been exposed to such tyranny as the Congo State employs in procuring, on its own terms, the commodities it covets. But the machinery of tyranny is being built up by methods and in ways that show how pernicious is the example set by that State and how degrading is the rivalry it has provoked. It is a very significant fact, moreover, that the policy pursued in the French Congo and the French Ubangi is completely at variance with that pursued by France in most of her other colonies.

* This circular was the subject of an appeal from the Aborigines Protection Society to the British Government on 7th September, 1901, in reply to which Lord Lansdowne agreed that "it is of the utmost importance to safeguard the native inhabitants of regions which form the subject of trading concessions against abuse," and promised that the Government would, "so far as their opportunities permit, endeavour to arrange that such protection is accorded." —*Aborigines' Friend*, October, 1901, pp. 105-108.

CHAPTER XV.

THE OUTLOOK.

IT is easier to take a false step than to retrace it, to commit a blunder or be party to a crime, however innocently, than to repair any evils that may result therefrom. Too often the discredit to those who have erred, and, yet more, the disasters both to them and to other sufferers through their acts, are irremediable. The survivors may mend their ways, and profit by their experiences; but dead victims, whether individuals or nations, cannot be brought back to life, nor can fundamental injuries, once incurred or inflicted, be more than patched up and plastered over. This truism is especially worth heeding, and acting upon as far as may be, in its bearings on the outcome of the Berlin Conference of 1884 in respect of the affairs of the Conventional Basin of the Congo which have been reviewed in the foregoing pages.

Let all possible allowance be made for the good intentions of the promoters of this memorable enterprise, and of the contributories to it. But that its avowed and ostensible purposes, as regards benefit either to the native populations of Equatorial Africa or to the civilised communities anxious to have honourable and serviceable dealings with them, have been achieved or are in the way of achievement by present methods will be asserted by few and can be reasonably maintained by none. They have, of course, procured temporary and inglorious gain to some, perhaps to many, not all of whom are blameworthy. A few lessons may have been taught or offered for learning, of which it should be possible for good use to be made in reforms and reconstructions fitted to lessen the evils that have been wrought and to bring about changes helpful to all worthy of help. But every day's delay increases the

difficulties of the task that ought to be undertaken and aggravates dangers that already threaten to be overwhelming.

It is for statesmen to work out the details of this task, and to face these dangers, with as much skill and energy and honesty as they can command. Here I attempt no more than a very concise statement of the problem that awaits their solution.

The problem really comprises two problems, distinct but closely related and interdependent. Neither can be solved without solution of the other. The solution of either will be the solution of both. The one requires that justice shall be done to the native populations with whom civilised communities have forced themselves, or been forced, into contact. The other requires that the rival, but not properly or necessarily antagonistic, claims and interests of the several civilised communities who are concerned in the matter shall be equitably adjusted and satisfactorily advanced.

The Native Question.

The native question I venture to place first. The earliest white visitors to Equatorial Africa, whether they went as mere travellers, prompted by a love of adventure or a desire to acquaint themselves with places and people hitherto unknown, as missionaries eager to improve the moral and material conditions of ignorant savages whose ways of life and religious beliefs and practices were obnoxious to them, or as traders seeking fresh markets for their wares and anxious to turn to account the as yet wasted or insufficiently developed resources of the soil and the mineral wealth beneath it, were, as a rule, welcomed by the black races they found in occupation of the country. These blacks, with a keen, albeit a rude, sense of their own rights and powers, were only too ready to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them, to accept instruction and guidance—in material, if not in spiritual affairs—from those whom they regarded as their superiors. Under enlightened and

enlightening leadership, firm but generous, they might have been made prompt disciples and capable partners, with as much benefit to themselves as to the newcomers. That, indeed, has happened in other parts of Africa, as well as in other parts of the world, and even, though rarely and inadequately, in portions of the Congo Basin. There, however, the partial and almost accidental success of civilising agencies has done little more than demonstrate the folly and wickedness of the other and by no means civilising agencies at work. From the first the predominating influences and achievements have been degrading, not elevating. Whatever advantages to the natives may have resulted from missionary efforts and scientific inquiries and travellers' pastimes, the chief aim and the chief attainment of white men's intrusion in Congoland have been not the natives, profit, but their own. So it was in the early days, when only the otherwise uninviting coasts were scoured in order to provide American and other sugar plantations and cotton fields with slaves, for whom the payment, if any was made, principally consisted of poisonous liquors and more immediately destructive implements of war. So it is now, when all accessible regions in the interior are scoured for ivory and rubber and so forth; with tools and textile fabrics added to the rum and rifles, the gin and gunpowder, which were the former staples of trade. If the over-sea slave traffic has been suppressed and the enslavement of one native by another forbidden, the old forms of slavery have been succeeded or supplemented by new, more grinding and hateful to the victims, and for the satisfaction of white instead of black oppressors. Savage customs and institutions have been condemned and interfered with in so far as they proved inconvenient to the usurpers of land and its produce, but, for the most part with nothing but increase of savagery. Under Congo State rule, if nowhere else, the tribes most prone to killing and eating their neighbours have been allowed to continue

and extend their cannibalism; and the Congo State has only been more reckless and unscrupulous than its British, French, German, and Portuguese associates in training and arming the most warlike for fighting and slaughtering purposes of their own. All this is in monstrous contempt and defiance of the avowed intentions and the explicit injunctions of the Brussels as well as of the Berlin Conference.

The Free Trade Question.

Nor has any more respect been paid to the free trade stipulations of the Berlin Conference. Great Britain, having its general fiscal policy to uphold, and as yet making no commercial use of its small portion of Congoland, is not an offender in this respect; and in Germany there is sufficient appreciation of the advantages of free trade, not at home, but for its colonial possessions, to prevent abuse of the provisions of the Berlin Act here involved. But in the immediately adjoining territory of France—and also of Portugal, though the latter may be scarcely worth taking account of—the Congo State has apt pupils, and accomplices as zealous as they can be. In French Congoland persistent efforts have of late been made, and are still being made, to imitate therein the illegal monopolist system to which the Congo State and its favourites owe most of the spurious success they enjoy. There is imitation also of the arbitrary and excessive taxation of the Congo State, in the shape of licences and the like, which is, to say the least, an abuse of the privileges accorded by the Berlin Conference as regards the collection, from those who use rivers, harbours, and so forth, of sufficient revenue to pay for their construction and upkeep.

On these points enough has been said, perhaps, in previous pages; but the very cautious view of the situation presented by Consul Pickersgill in 1898 may here be quoted. Matters have certainly not improved in the five years since he reported that of the Europeans then in the

State's territory, "less than 1,408 all told," the majority were "either in the service of the Government or employés of the trading companies in which the Government had special interest, or engineers, clerks, and workmen engaged in the construction of the railway." After mentioning the missionaries who are there on sufferance, specially favoured in some respects, he added, "Then come the agents of the once all-powerful 'Dutch house,' noteworthy still as the only independent trading association having factories on the upper river; the representatives of an old Liverpool firm, which used to make, in the pre-partition days, its hundreds of thousands a year in West Africa, but which now is glad to clear a very modest percentage on its invested capital; a few Portuguese traders, and a sprinkling of Belgian storekeepers, competing hard for the business of supplying the wants of their fellow-countrymen. There are no planters, no ranchers, no miners. With the mercantile portion of the community the monopolisation of the principal sources of ivory and india-rubber by the Government has always been a standing grievance. I may conclude my report by quoting the jocose observation of the English and American missionaries, who declared to me that there is nothing free in the Independent State except fevers; while a Belgian father, with whom I had some conversation on the subject, remarked, 'The Government taxes even the civilisation we bring.'"*

The "civilisation" brought, by ways for which the missionaries are scarcely responsible, and which they cannot control, is almost wholly uncivilising, and its purpose is principally, if not altogether, the conversion of King Leopold's share of Congoland into a monopolist field for exploitation in the exclusive interests of those seeking temporary and unjustifiable profit from their unscrupulous investments. According to present arrangements, Belgium is heir to the property that is being built up on unstable foundations, and in scandalous contraven-

* Report on the 'Congo Independent State' (1898), pp. 12-14.

tion of the requirements of the Berlin and Brussels Conferences as regards alike the native populations and the outside world. If Belgium, when it has the chance, declines to accept the ugly legacy, as it may reasonably do, and if King Leopold's successor is not in a position to carry on his project, France has the reversion, and in this fact is, apparently, the strongest motive and excuse, such as it may be, for recent leanings of French statesmen and ambitions of French speculators.

The Need for International Action.

It is for the other signatories to the Berlin and Brussels General Acts to decide whether they are willing that the systematic and deliberate perversion of policy they so strongly insisted upon in 1884, and again in 1889, shall be further developed and rendered permanent; whether, while some of them are eagerly aiming at and acquiring fresh territories and markets in other parts of Africa for their especial benefit, they consent to the appropriation of the vast Congo Basin by those to whom its guardianship and management have been entrusted, not for their own selfish use or misuse, but for the advantage of the indigenous inhabitants and of the civilised world. The apathy shown by these signatory Powers hitherto is well nigh inexplicable. Surely the time has fully arrived for action on their part, if not on behalf of the worst sufferers, their native clients, at any rate in their own interests.

The two issues at stake cannot be separated. If the primary object for which the Berlin Conference was convened, the assertion and attainment of equitable free trade within and throughout the Congo Basin, is no longer cared for, the iniquitous and perilous treatment to which the millions of its aboriginal races are subjected imposes moral obligations on all responsible for it which cannot honourably, and, more than that, prudently be ignored.

Let it be remembered that in the heart of Africa, vitally affecting the welfare of all the surrounding portions of the continent which are in present or prospective occupation

by the European Powers is a poisonous growth of spurious "civilisation" which contaminates and more than threatens overwhelming injury to all its neighbours. The territory of the Congo State has been converted into a vast field of havoc and spoliation, mainly through the training and arming of Congo savages for the shooting of other savages. Events have there proved that, though the training and arming may be of lasting effect, the uses to which they have been put are temporary, and cannot be other than dangerous to the authors. The Congo State has created what will surely be its own Nemesis, and has taken a leading part in the organisation of forces of savagery which, when they have served their immediate purpose, if not before, will inevitably wreck the machinery of well-meant or ill-meant, or at any rate ill-contrived and disastrous, "civilisation" in Africa. To those by whom humanitarian obligations are scouted, consideration of this question of expediency is earnestly commended.

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